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A

GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL

View of the World:

EXHIBITING

A COMPLETE DELINEATION OF THE

NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FEATURES

OF

EACH COUNTRY;

AND A SUCCINCT NARRATIVE OF

THE ORIGIN OF THE DIFFERENT NATIONS, THEIR POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS, AND PROGRESS IN ARTS, SCIENCES, LITERATURE, COMMERCE, &c.

The whole comprising all that is important in the Geography of the Globe, and the History of Mankind.

BY JOHN BIGLAND,

Author of

"LETTERS ON ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY," "ESSAYS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS, &c. &c.

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Plate XVIII

TURKEY
in
EUROPE
and
HUNGARY
POLAND
RUSSIA
GERMANY
HUNGARY
TRANSILVANIA
MOLDAVIA
BESSARABIA
BUDZIAC TARTARY
NEW RUSSIA
LITTLE TARTARY
SEA OF ASOPH
KUBAN
CRIM
CIRCASSIA
SCLAVONIA
CROATIA
BOSNIA
SERVIA
WALACHIA
BULGARIA
TURKEY IN EUROPE
ROMANIA
MACEDONIA
ALBANIA
GREECE
THESSALY
EPIRUS
MOREA
ARCHIPELAGO
BLACK SEA
TURKEY IN ASIA
NATOLIA
GULF OF VENICE
IONIAN SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CANDIA
VIENNA
BUDA
Belgrade
CONSTANTINOPLE
Adrianople
Salonichi
Smyrna
Rhodes
Baba Gulf
Samsoun Bay
Hungarian Miles 15 to a Degree
British Statute Miles
East Longitude 18 from London

Serfoji Rajah 1819

A

VIEW OF THE WORLD.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

EUROPEAN TURKEY.

CHAP. I.

Situation—Extent—Boundaries—Face of the Country—Mountains—Rivers—Canals—Lakes—Mineralogy—Mineral Waters—Soil—Climate—Vegetable Productions—Zoology—Natural Curiosities—Antiquities and Artificial Curiosities.

EUROPEAN Turkey is situated between 36° and 49° of north latitude, and between 37° and 40° of east longitude; extending about 1,000 British miles in length from east to west, and about 900 in breadth from north to south. It is bounded on the north by the Russian and Austrian dominions; by the Euxine, the Bosphorus, the Propontis, the Hellespont, and the Archipelago, or Egean Sea, on the east; by the Mediterranean on the south; and on the west by the Ionian Sea, which is a part of the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, and the territories of Austria.

Face of the country.]—The general aspect of European Turkey is mountainous; but interspersed with delightful valleys and plains, which render its appearance, in many parts, beautifully picturesque. On the

north-west of Constantinople, is a level country of a great extent.* From that metropolis to Adrianople, it is one continued plain.† The shores of the Euxine present many level deserts. Wallachia and Moldavia are, in general, extensive plains. The countries towards the Danube are generally level. Albania, the ancient Epirus, is almost wholly rugged and mountainous. Macedonia and Greece, are countries of a delightfully variegated surface, and charmingly picturesque.

Mountains.]—The chains of mountains are numerous, and some of them extensive. The most northern are Bastarnic Alps, a part of the grand Carpathian chain. This branch, running in a south-western direction for more than 200 miles, forms the northern and western boundary of Wallachia. But the principal chain of mountains in European Turkey is that of Hæmus, which, under various modern appellations, appears to extend from the Euxine to the Adriatic. The mountains of Rhodope, on the north of Thrace, appear to be a branch of the chain of Hæmus. Many considerable ranges, indeed, branch off from this grand chain, extending in various directions into different parts of the country. The east and south of Greece present many chains of inconsiderable extent; and several solitary hills of classical fame, as those of Olympus, Pelion, Ossa, and others. Mount Athos is a detached mountain of considerable height and singular form, bearing a great resemblance to Montserrat in Spain. Like the latter, it seems to be designed by nature for a place of contemplative solitude, and its picturesque declivities are covered with numerous churches and monasteries.

* Arrowsmith's Map. † Browne's Trav. p. 508.

Rivers.

Rivers.]—Among the rivers of European Turkey, the Danube, already mentioned in the description of the Austrian empire, merits particular notice. From Belgrade almost to Orsova, a space of near 100 miles, it forms the boundary between the Ottoman and Austrian empires, dividing Servia from the Bannat, and then pervades the Turkish dominions in a course of more than 400 miles, before it discharges itself into the Euxine. The Danube is in several places a mile in breadth, and might afford incalculable advantages to an industrious and commercial people.

None of the other rivers will bear any comparison with the majestic Danube. The ancient Hebrus, distinguished by the modern appellation of Maritz, is the next in fame and importance. It rises in the mountains of Hæmus, and runs almost east to Adrianople: it then turns to the south, and falls into the Archipelago, after a course of more than 250 miles. The ancient Axus runs a south-easterly course of about 200 miles, and falls into the same sea at the Gulph of Salonica. There are several other rivers of inferior magnitude, as well as some lakes. But if we except the Danube, the rivers, as well as the lakes of European Turkey, are more distinguished by their classical fame, than by their geographical importance.

Mineralogy.]—From the mountainous surface of the country, European Turkey might be supposed to abound in mineral treasures; and ancient accounts would authorize the conjecture. In the time of Philip of Macedonia, the gold mines of Philippi, about eighty miles to the east of Salonica, afforded annually 1000 talents, or 2,880,000l. sterling; and silver mines were discovered in Attica, and other parts

 of

of Greece. But the Turks have unaccountably neglected this source of opulence, and the mineralogy of their extensive empire is a barren field. Their mineral waters also, which apparently must abound, are little known or celebrated.

Soil.]—The soil exhibits all the variety that a country so extensive, and of so diversified a surface, can be supposed to afford. In the level provinces of the north it is rich and fertile: in the southern parts it is frequently of a lighter nature. Fertility, however, may be considered as its general characteristic.

Climate.]—These, regions extending through thirteen degrees of latitude, must present various degrees of temperature In general, however, they enjoy a pure air and a delightful climate. Even in Moldavia, the cold is moderate; and in Wallachia, the climate is so temperate, as to permit the culture of the vine. In the regions of Mount Hæmus, and in the mountainous country of Albania, the temperature must partake of the cold, which is common to such elevated situations; but Macedonia and Greece have always been famed for the purity of the air, and the excellence of the climate.

Vegetable Productions.]—European Turkey abounds in all the productions of the other countries of Europe and Asia, that are situated under the same parallels. A reference to the descriptions of Italy, Spain, and Portugal, might therefore suffice on this article. It may be briefly remarked, that the northern provinces, towards the Danube, afford excellent corn and pasturage, the southern parts are chiefly distinguished by the prosperous culture of the vine and the olive; but those countries in general are well adapted to the production of grain, fruits, and wines of the best quality.

quality. But Turkish despotism operates as a perpetual check to agriculture, and every kind of improvement; and its baleful influence has changed some of the most fertile spots on the globe into barren deserts.*

Zoology.]—The zoology of those countries has few peculiarities, except that the camel may be added to the catalogue of domestic animals. The Turkish horses, both in Europe and Asia, are celebrated for their spirit and shape; but Wallachia possesses the finest breed. Horned cattle and sheep are plentiful; but little is known of their breeds or qualities. The Wallachian sheep are particularly distinguished by their elegant spiral horns.

Natural curiosities.]—The natural curiosities of these celebrated countries have received little illustration from scientific travellers. Of these, Mount Athos may be considered as one of the most remarkable, and the most known. It rises in a conical form to the height of about 1100 yards, and the numerous churches and monasteries with which the declivities of this singular pinnacle are covered, give it an interesting and picturesque appearance.

In reviewing this concise sketch of European Turkey, the philosophical reader must regard it as a matter of surprize and regret, that the interior geography of these classical regions should be so imperfectly known. These countries, which had so conspicuous a place in the annals of the world, and of which the ancient history constitutes so important a part of our early studies, may be ranked among those that are the least frequented by modern travellers.

* Turkey, in Europe, is well supplied with timber, having extensive forests, Several of these are seen towards the coasts of the Euxine. Jackson, p. 246, 247, 250, 251.

Antiquities and artificial curiosities.]—The ancient monuments of those countries, so eminent in historical fame, cannot but be numerous and important; but all are miserably dilapidated through the barbarism of the Turks, whose only occupation is to destroy. The most remarkable are the remains of ancient Athens, which serve to excite a melancholy recollection of her ancient glory. Among these, the ruins of the magnificent temple of Minerva have attracted the attention of many travellers. These relics of ancient magnificence have been so often and so amply described, and represented in excellent drawings, as to supercede all further illustration. The most concise description of the remains of antiquity to be seen at Constantinople, and in other parts of European Turkey, would require a separate volume. The church of Sancta Sophia, or the Divine Wisdom, now a Mahomedan mosque, remains a venerable monument of the reign of the emperor Justinian.* Greece, and the adjacent islands, Macedonia, and Constantinople, may be regarded as a continued series of curiosities. The scientific and literary traveller cannot survey those classical countries, the cradle, or at least the nursery of those arts and sciences, which now give to Europe her proud pre-eminence over all the rest of the globe, without the most lively emotions. Where present objects are wanted, recollection supplies the defect. Imagination calls up the venerable shades of those heroes, philosophers, poets, and orators, whose names are so celebrated; and presents to the mental eye an interesting picture of the scenes of history, the discoveries of science, and the effects of art.

* See Sancta Sophia in the description of Constantinople. For an account of its erection, see Gibbon's Rom. Emp. vol. 7. p. 119, &c.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Chief Cities and Towns—Edifices—Islands.

CONSTANTINOPLE, the metropolis of the Ottoman empire, is situated on the European side of the Bosphorus, in 41° north latitude, and 28° 58′ east longitude. The appearance of this capital, in approaching it from the Propontis, or in viewing it from the coast of Asia, is the most magnificent that can be conceived. Rising like an amphitheatre from the shores of the Propontis and the Bosphorus, and crowning the summits of seven gently swelling hills, the buildings appear in stages one above another; and the whole city, with its splendid mosques and minarets, and especially the magnificent dome of Sancta Sophia, presents itself at once to the view. The situation, indeed, is esteemed the finest in Europe, or even in the world. But the stranger, who on his approach is struck with the magnificent and imposing prospect of Constantinople, finds his expectations greatly disappointed on entering the city. The streets are in general narrow and unpaved, filled with dust and mud: the houses are mean, when compared with those of other European capitals; and closed gates almost every where meet the eye. On the whole, the interior of Constantinople has a melancholy appearance, except in the parts devoted to commerce,

 where

where all is a scene of bustle and business. The bezestan, or great market-place, is the most regular part of the city ; the merchants have their shops excellently arranged, and well stored with merchandise. The slave market is a large court or square, surrounded by porticos, where that sex, which is so respectfully treated in the civilized countries of Europe, is subjected to the indignity of being bought and sold like cattle. The greatest part of the females exposed to sale in this market are natives of Circassia, and the neighbouring countries ; and most of them sold into slavery by their unnatural parents, or their avaricious and tyrannical rulers. These with others, whom various circumstances have reduced to this situation, supply the seraglios of the Turkish grandees. The hyppodrome, a place destined to exercises on horseback, is a parallelogram of about 400 paces in length by 100 in breadth. The meidan is a spacious square, which serves as a place of general resort for all ranks of people. Constantinople abounds with antiquities and remains of ancient edifices ; but almost all these monuments of former magnificence are miserably disfigured and dilapidated. The principal relic of ancient grandeur is the magnificent mosque of Sancta Sophia, once a Christian church, which still remains a noble monument of architecture, scarcely surpassed by any in the world, except, perhaps, by that of St. Peter at Rome. This celebrated church was the work of the emperor Justinian, who expended immense sums on its construction, and considered it as one of the chief glories of his reign. Among the antiquities of Constantinople may also be reckoned the tomb of Constantine the Great, its founder, which is still preserved. There are several other

mosques and public edifices at Constantinople; but none of them display any great degree of magnificence; and none of the Turkish buildings can boast of architectural beauties. The seraglio, or palace of the Ottoman emperor, consists of a vast assemblage of buildings inclosed within a wall of about thirty feet high, with battlements, embrasures, and towers, in the style of ancient fortifications. The term seraglio is sometimes restricted to the apartments of the Sultan's women; but in its enlarged sense, it signifies the whole inclosure, containing the lodgings of the different ministers of state, and the various offices of government, besides the apartments of the monarch and his family. It is seated on one of the angular points of the city, near the junction of the Bosphorus and the Propontis, and commands a delightful view of the coast of Asia Minor. This inclosure, sacred to despotism, no traveller is permitted to inspect, except the audience chamber, in which the Grand Seignor, seated on a superb throne, under a canopy of velvet, fringed with jewels, receives foreign ambassadors.

Constantinople is surrounded with a high and thick wall, with battlements and towers after the Oriental manner, and defended by a lined but shallow ditch. The work, although double on the land side, would not, however, be able to withstand a vigorous assault. The city is built in a triangular form, and beyond the harbour, which forms one side of the triangle, are the large suburbs of Pera and Galata, in the former of which the foreign ambassadors and all the Franks reside. The population of Constantinople has been variously estimated; but setting aside the exaggerated accounts of romantic travellers, I shall only observe, that Mr. Dallaway supposes the number of inhabitants

in the city and suburbs to amount to about 400,000, which seems to be the most probable computation. Of these about 200,000 are Turks, 100,000 Greeks, and the rest Jews, Armenians, and Franks. The port of Constantinople, which opens into the Bosphorus, is one of the finest in the world; but it lies under the disadvantage of being almost inaccessible during the strong north winds which often prevail, and sometimes for months together render it impossible for vessels to proceed through the Hellespont, against the strong current that sets down that strait.* The Hellespont is near sixty miles in length, and from less than half a mile to three miles in breadth. The Bosphorus varies from 800 paces in its narrowest part, to two miles in breadth; at the Seraglio point, its breadth is about half a mile, and the whole length is about sixteen and a half from the Propontis to the Euxine.† Its shores are beautiful beyond description, and the environs of Constantinople are extremely delightful.

It has already been observed, that Constantinople was built by Constantine the Great, who removed the imperial residence thither from Rome.‡ It was afterwards the capital of the eastern empire, and long the most magnificent and splendid city in the world; the great theatre of learning, of commerce, and wealth, when Europe was plunged in ignorance and barbarism. But its splendor was greatly defaced at its capture by the Latins in 1204, and at length totally obscured by its subjection to the Ottomans.§ Its trade,

* For the advantages and disadvantages of Constantinople, as a port, see Letters on Ancient History.

† Tournefort, vol. 2, letter 8.

‡ See Historical View of Italy.

§ For the beautiful situation of Constantinople, and its original magnificence, see Gibbon's elegant description Dec. Rom. Emp. For a view

however, is yet considerable, although a great part of it is carried on by foreigners.

Adrianople.]—The second city of European Turkey is Adrianople, situated about 140 English miles to the north-west of Constantinople. It stands on the declivity of an eminence on the banks of the Hebrus, at a point where that river receives two smaller streams.* The city is of a circular form, and about two miles in circumference. The streets are narrow and crooked, but many of the houses are large and well built, and several of the mosques are magnificent. The seraglio, which is separated from the city by the small river Arda, is in a charming situation, commanding an extensive view of the country. Adrianople was founded by the Emperor Adrian, on the site of the ancient Orestias. In the fourteenth century it was taken by Sultan Amurath I, and until the fall of Constantinople was the capital of the Ottoman dominions.† The environs of Adrianople are pleasant; the country is fertile and celebrated for its excellent wines.

Sophia.]—Sophia, situated in a flat and low country to the north-west of Adrianople, is meanly built, but has a considerable trade, and contains about 70,000 inhabitants.‡

Silistria.]—Silistria, in Bulgaria, situated on the Danube, has a population of about 60,000.§

Bucharest.]—Bucharest, the chief city of Wallachia, is supposed to contain about the same number.

of its modern stase, see Tournefort's Trav., Dallaway's Constantinople, Wittman's Travels, Olivier's Travels, &c.

* Busching Geog. vol. 3, p. 340.

† The population of Adrianople is computed at 80,000. Zimmermann, table 16.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

Belgrade.

Belgrade.]—Belgrade, the capital of Servia, is situated at the confluence of the Save and the Danube, and has been in almost every war an object of contest between the Turks and the Austrians. It is now destitute of fortifications, but is still a considerable town, being supposed to contain about 25,000 inhabitants.

Salonica.]—In the southern provinces the principal city is Salonica, the ancient Thessalonica, seated on a fine bay of the Archipelago. It is a city of considerable trade, and contains about 40,000 inhabitants.* But Athens, the celebrated theatre of heroism, of eloquence, of philosophy, and literature, is now little better than a large village; and ancient Greece, which was formerly crowded with cities, scarcely contains a single town, that from its modern importance is worthy of geographical commemoration.

Edifices.]—The principal edifices of European Turkey are those already included in the description of the capital. Here are no splendid villas, &c. such as are seen in most countries of Christianity. The finest buildings are the mosques, which have for the most part been Christian churches.

ISLANDS.

The Grecian Islands are of equal celebrity with the continent. Except Mytelene, Samos, Tenedos, Cos, and Rhodes, which are near the Asiatic shore, they are all considered by geographers as belonging to Europe. The principal, in regard to extent, are Candia and Negropont.

* Zimmermann, table 16. Pinkerton states the population of Salonica at 60,000. Geog. vol. 1, p. 458.

Candia.]—Candia, the ancient Crete, is the most famous, as well as the most extensive, and in every respect the most important of all the Grecian isles. It is most advantageously situated for commerce, being about 600 miles from Constantinople, and little more than 400 from Egypt, and nearly equidistant from the coasts of Europe, Asia, and Africa.* This classical island is near 190 British miles in length, by an irregular breadth, which varies from forty to twenty, and sometimes to fifteen miles. The face of the country is in general mountainous. The celebrated Mount Ida occupies almost all the middle of the island, of which, indeed, two-thirds consist of nothing but mountains, some of which are perpetually covered with snow.† The vallies, however, are extremely fertile, and the island produces grain, fruits, and timber in abundance. The wheat is of the finest sort, and the wines are exquisite. Tournefort says, that "whoever has tasted the Candian wines, soon despises all others."‡ The climate is hot, but the air is pure and salubrious, except when the south wind blows, which is dangerous, and sometimes suffocates people in the open fields.§ The waters of Candia are exceedingly pure and wholesome; and although it has no rivers, it is irrigated by numberless springs and rivulets. Upon the whole this island appears formed by nature for a desireable place of abode; but Turkish despotism and the ignorance of the modern

* Creta Jovis Magni Medio jacet insula ponto Virg. Æneid. lib. 3, v. 104.

† Tournefort, vol. 1, letter 1, 2, 48, 56, 97. This traveller found the mountains covered with snow in the month of July, vol. 1, p. 84.

‡ These wines are red, white, and claret. Tournefort, vol. 1. p. 96.

§ Tournefort, vol. 1, letter 1, 23, 97.

Greeks

Greeks counteract her intensions. Marble is so plentiful, that most of the villages are built of that material in its rough state, as hewn from the quarry. The zoology of Candia is not defective. The horses are small but spirited, and constant exercise in climbing and descending the mountains, renders them amazingly sure footed. In the most frightful descents, which are very frequent in this island, they never make a false step if left to their own guidance. The Greek and Turkish ladies always travel on horseback, as in this rugged and precipitous country no carriages can be used, and accidents scarcely ever happen through the stumbling of their horses. The Candians breed numbers of sheep, and their mutton is good, but the wool is coarse. They have also plenty of swine, and abundance of pigeons, poultry, partridges, woodcocks, and hares. In summer their butchers meat is excellent, but in winter the want of pasture renders it lean. In ancient times this island was famed for the excellence of its productions. Pliny bestows on it the highest encomiums, and affirms, that whatever was produced in Crete, infinitely excelled all the productions of the same kind in other countries.* The inhabitants of Candia, both Turks and Greeks, are tall, robust, and vigorous. From the earliest ages they were famed for their skill in the use of the bow, and the Cretan archers contributed greatly to the safe retreat of the 10,000 Greeks.† Ancient history, indeed, affords numerous instances of the signal services rendered by the Cretan bowmen and slingers.‡ They

* "Quicquid in Creta nascitur infinito præstat cæteris ejusdem generis alibi genitis." Hist. Nat. lib. 25, cap. 8.

† Xenophon, retreat of the 10,000, lib. 4.

‡ Livy, lib. 37 and 38.

also

also excelled in all the exercises of the body, and were not less famed for their genius and mental powers. But although this island was the cradle of Grecian legislature, the Cretans were always remarked for their unprincipled conduct and profligate morals.* This island contains a remarkable labyrinth, regarded by travellers as a great curiosity.† A subterraneous cavern, with a thousand intricate windings, pervades the whole interior of a hill of soft stone at the foot of Mount Ida, about three miles from the site of the ancient city of Gortyna. The entrance is by a natural opening seven or eight paces wide, but so low that a person cannot enter without stooping. The principal alley, which is less perplexing than the rest, is about 1200 paces in length; it leads to the extremity of the labyrinth, and terminates in two large and beautiful apartments. If a person strike into any other path, he is immediately bewildered among the devious and winding alleys, which branch out into an infinity of ramifications, extending in every direction, and render it almost impossible ever to regain the entrance. The only method of ensuring a safe return from this intricate labyrinth, is to scatter straw or some other material in advancing, so as to mark the track, besides the indispensable precaution of being well provided with lights. At the extremity are seen inscribed the names of persons of different nations, who at various periods have visited this wonderful subterraneous vault. Various conjectures, relative to the origin and

* Polybius, lib. 6. Ext. 3. Strabo Geog. lib. 10. St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.

† It must be observed, that this is not the famous labyrinth of Crete, which was modelled after that of Egypt, and of which, even in Pliny's time, not the least vestige remained. Pliny Hist. Nat. lib. 36, cap. 13.

destination

destination of this singular recess, have been formed by learned travellers. Mr. Tournefort, however, with great appearance of probability, considers it as originally a work of nature, and improved by human labour for some purpose now unknown. This traveller also remarks, that throughout the whole island there are numerous caverns, especially in Mount Ida, which presents many deep and perpendicular abysses.*

Candia abounds in relics of antiquity, as well as in natural curiosities, but they are all in a state of extreme dilapidation. The ruins of Gortyna, about a century ago, proclaimed its ancient magnificence, but these venerable remains suffer a continual decay and dispersion. Even at that time the peasant drove his plough, and the shepherd fed his sheep among the wrecks of antiquity, consisting of marbles, jasper, and granite, wrought with exquisite art.† Antique columns, fragments of sculpture, and other relics of ancient art and splendor, are dispersed in every part of the island, and often blended among mean and rude materials in the construction of modern buildings. But these dilapidations are common in every part of the Turkish dominions, and exhibit a striking contrast between the ancient glory, and the present degradation of those celebrated countries.

The classical island of Candia, or Crete, is famous in the history and mythology of ancient Greece. Here the poets have fixed the birth-place of Jupiter and most of the Grecian Gods, because in this island they were first known and worshipped, with the ceremonies afterwards used by the Greeks in their temples. Situated at a convenient distance from Egypt and Phœnicia, it had undoubtedly been peopled by

* Tournefort, vol. 1, letter 2, 69, &c.

† Ibid. p. 62, &c.

colonies from these countries, and consequently was the first corner of Europe in which the rudiments of civilization appeared. Ancient history obscurely presents to our view the venerable shade of Minos, its king, to whom the Cretans owed most of their advantages.* Through the gloomy mist of remote antiquity, we may discover him to have been one of those superior minds which are destined to improve the human race. He framed a system of government and a code of laws, which served as the model and ground work of Grecian legislation. Lycurgus studied the science of civil polity, in visiting Egypt and Crete, and appears to have taken the Cretan constitution as a model for that of Sparta.† But it was not only for the arts of internal polity that the Cretans were famous, they were equally formidable in arms. They cleared the Grecian seas from the depredations of pirates, they subdued several of the neighbouring islands, humbled some of the maritime states on the continent, and were victorious over Athens, then in its infancy; they imposed on that city a most oppressive tribute.‡ So long as Greece flourished, Crete as a friend or an enemy is conspicuous in her history; and after being drawn into the vortex of her principal revolutions, is ultimately involved in her fate. On the fall of the Byzantine empire, this island was seized by the Venetians, under whom it was commercial and flourishing. The bloody wars which preceded its conquest by the Turks, will be noticed in the history of that nation. The siege of Candia, its

* The reign of Minos is placed by the Parian marbles 1430 years before the Christian æra.

† Plutarch in vita Lycurgi.

‡ Thucyd. lib. 1. Plutarch vita Thesci.

 capital,

capital, which, with some short intervals, continued the space of twenty-four years, from 1646 to 1670, has rendered this island not less famous in modern than in ancient history.

Negropont.]—Negropont, the ancient Eubœa, is about 100 British miles in length, and from 20 to 25 in breadth. It stretches from the north-west to the south-east along the coast of Achaia, from which it is separated by a narrow strait, noted for the irregularity of its currents. The soil is fertile in corn, wine, fruits, and pasturage, and the island abounds with cattle.

It would be both useless and tedious to enter into a particular description of all the different islands of the Grecian Archipelago, some of which are of a diminutive extent, and of little modern importance, although few of them are without some share of historical fame, and some remains of antiquity. It will, therefore, suffice to mention such as are most worthy of geographical or historical commemoration.

Stalimene.]—Stalimene, the ancient Lemnos, is situated in the northern part of the Archipelago, and is almost a square of twenty-five miles in length and breadth. It is fruitful in corn and wine, but chiefly remarkable for a mineral earth used in medicine, and called terra lemnia, or terra sigillata, because it is sealed by the Turks, who derive from it a considerable revenue.

Scyros.]—Scyros is about sixty miles in compass, and chiefly remarkable for its remains of antiquity.

Patmos.]—Patmos is a dry and barren rock, about twenty miles in circumference. In this island is the cave in which St. John is supposed to have written the Apocalypse.

Naxia.

Naxia.]—Naxia, the ancient Naxos, is about seventy miles in compass. It is extremely fertile, and famed for the excellency of its wines.* After the conquest of Constantinople by the Latins, in the year 1204, many of the Grecian isles were formed into a Venetian Duchy under Marco Sanudo, who fixed his residence in Naxos, where he and his successors, during the space of 300 years, reigned as dukes of the Archipelago, until they were finally expelled by the Turks under Selim II.

Siphanto.]—Siphanto was anciently famous for its rich mines of gold and silver.

Serpo.]—Serpo abounds with iron and loadstone.†

Paros.]—Paros, about thirty-six miles in circuit, is famous for its excellent marble. From this island we derive the noblest monument of chronology in the world, the Parian or Arundelian marbles, which comprise a period of 1318 years, beginning from the reign of Cecrops, the first king of Athens.

Antiparos.]—Antiparos is about sixteen miles in circuit, and is divided from Paros by a strait of about a mile in breadth. This island is of little importance, but it contains one of the most singular curiosities that nature has formed. This is the wonderful grotto, or cavern, so minutely described by two eminent travellers.‡ It is situated in the southern part of the island, at the distance of almost two miles from the sea. The entrance presents a rugged cavern about thirty paces wide, and vaulted in a kind of arch, with some ancient inscriptions greatly defaced. After proceeding about twenty paces, the traveller, by the help of a rope, descends a frightful precipice, from which

* Tournefort, vol. 1, letter 5. † Ibid. vol. 1, letter 4, p. 186 and 192.

‡ Tournefort and Lady Craven.

he soon proceeds to another still more terrible. Here the descent is by a ladder placed on the side of tremendous abysses. A third precipice conducts to a rocky and difficult path, that leads to the stupendous cavern, which is supposed to be 300 yards below the surface of the ground, and in consequence greatly below the level of the sea. The grotto is about eighty yards high, and a hundred wide. The top, the bottom, and the sides are all of marble, which, except a few pieces of a brownish kind, is of the most dazzling whiteness. The roof is a natural arch, from which the stalactitic marble hangs in the most picturesque and elegant forms. At the bottom are also various stems, or pillars of marble, particularly a pyramid twenty-four feet high, and as elegantly adorned with chapiters, bunches in the shape of cauliflowers, &c. as if it had been the work of a sculptor. M. de Nointel, ambassador of Louis XIV. to the Porte, was the first modern traveller who renewed the memory of this grotto, into which none of the natives durst descend until his arrival at Antiparos. This gentleman, accompanied by above 500 persons of various descriptions, passed three days at Christmas, 1673, in this subterranean recess, and using the pyramid already mentioned as an altar, caused mass to be celebrated amidst the sound of trumpets, hautboys, fifes, and violins, while 100 large wax candles, and 400 lamps illuminated the grotto.

Santorin.]—The island of Santorin, and the neighbouring seas, are remarkable for the volcanic concussions to which they have always been subject. Several small islands in the vicinity have been augmented, and others diminished in size; and new islands and rocks have at different periods appeared.

One

One of the most remarkable circumstances of this kind took place in 1707, when a new island of almost a mile in diameter arose out of the sea near Santorin, with tremendous volcanic explosions.*

Delos.]—In regard to classical fame, none of the Grecian islands holds a higher rank than Delos, which being only a rock of eight or nine miles in circumference, derived from superstition all its importance and splendor. Here the Grecian mythology fixed the birth place of Apollo and Diana, and Delos was consecrated to these divinities. Erisicton, son of Cecrops, the first king of Athens, is said to have erected the temple of Apollo, which, through the piety of the Greeks, became one of the most magnificent in the ancient world.† Devotion proved the source of opulence and splendor. The superb city of Delos covered almost the whole island, and exhibited a spectacle of exquisite magnificence. The cities of Greece deputed their priests to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Delian Apollo. And Nicias, the famous Athenian general, having paid a visit to Delos, with all the pomp of religious solemnity, after causing sacrifices to be offered, consecrated a large palm tree of brass to Apollo, and made liberal donatives to the Delians in order to procure the favour of the God:‡ Apollo, however, has long ago lost his influence; a few scattered fragments of marble, &c. are all that remain of his magnificent temple and city: and the celebrated and sacred Delos, divested of its imaginary greatness, is sunk into its native insignificance, and left without inhabitants. The ancient and modern

* Tournefort, vol. 1, letter 6, and the authors there quoted. Payne's Geog. Extracts, p. 252, &c.

† Euseb. Chron, p. 76.

‡ Plutarch in Nicia.

state of Delos, may be regarded as one of those numerous articles in the history of the world, which strikingly display the power of opinion. The islands of the Archipelago being always dependent on Greece, and implicated in her destiny, any further historical remarks would here be superfluous.

CHAP. III.

Historical View—General Progress of Society—Of Arts and Sciences—Letters and Commerce.

EUROPEAN Turkey comprises a number of ancient kingdoms and republics; and besides the grand distinction of Greeks and Turks, its inhabitants must be considered as an assemblage of various nations, which, in process of time, and by repeated conquests, were united under the Roman dominion, and remained subject to the Eastern empire until its subversion by the Ottomans. Of these different nations I shall not attempt to trace the history. The plan of this work can only admit the delineation of general features, and the exhibition of general views. In order to facilitate the understanding of the ancient and modern history of a country so generally noticed, it may not be amiss to observe, that disregarding the exact coincidence of boundaries, the Morea is the ancient Peloponnesus, while Romelia comprises the rest of Greece with Macedonia and Thrace; that Albania embraces the ancient kingdom of Epirus, Chaonia, and part of Illyricum; Bulgaria includes the two provinces of Moesia and Servia; and Bosnia, with the greatest part of Turkish Croatia, are a portion of the ancient Pannonia. The Danube was in general the boundary of the Roman dominions. Beyond that river, Wallachia and Moldavia constituted a part of the ancient

Dacia, afterwards the seat of the Gothic empire, which proved so formidable to declining Rome.* The original population of all the northern parts, is generally supposed to have sprung from the Scythians on the north of the Euxine, blended with many Slavonic tribes. These, during the declining ages of the Roman empire, spread gradually towards the south; and the greatest part of the population of European Turkey must, therefore, be considered as originally Scythian and Slavonic. Before the age of Philip of Macedon, these nations were little known, and previous to that period, they are seldom mentioned in history.

The origin of the Greeks, that celebrated people, who diffused science and letters throughout Europe, and whose progress in arts and in arms constitutes one of the most splendid ornaments of history, is involved in deep obscurity. If we may credit tradition, Greece was originally inhabited by various savage tribes, as little acquainted with the arts and conveniencies of civilized life, as any that have been discovered in America or New Zealand.† Among these aborigines, however, are reckoned the Pelasgi, who appear to have been horsemen, and consequently must have been somewhat above a state of absolute barbarism.‡ According to the representation which Pausanias and others have given of the savage state of the early Greeks, they seem rather to have derived their origin from the Scythians of the North, than from the civilized countries of Asia Minor, or Phœnicia

In this contracted sketch it will be impossible to develope the long and important series of Grecian history. The multiplicity of learned volumes already

* Dalmatia, on the coast of the Adriatic, retains its ancient appellation.

† Pausanias, lib. 8, ‡ Strabo, lib. 8.

written

written on that interesting subject, renders the task unnecessary. I shall therefore content myself with a concentrated view of the principal events and most important revolutions, and a rough sketch of the state of the Greeks in the most interesting periods, such as most strikingly mark the progress or decline of their empire and their arts.

Passing over the dark and fabulous ages of Grecian history, without attempting to connect the traditional tale, to reconcile its discordances, or explode its absurdities, I shall only observe, that from whatever quarter Greece received its original population; it was indebted to Asia and Egypt for the arts of civilized life. The Grecian historians inform us, on the authority of ancient tradition, that colonies from those countries arrived at various periods, and established themselves in different parts of Greece. The fact, indeed, is too probable to be called in question. History has ever preserved the names of several of those maritime adventurers. Among these, Inachus, who conducted a colony from Egypt or Phœnicia, and founded the city of Argos. Cecrops, the leader of a band of emigrants from Egypt, and the founder of Athens; Cadmus, the Tyrian, to whom Thebes in Bœotia owed its origin; and Danaus, a famous Egyptian adventurer, who greatly improved Argos, and fortified it with a citadel, stand particularly distinguished as the early civilizers of Greece.* But the number of small states, into which the country was divided, and the evils to which it was constantly exposed from intestine divisions and foreign invasion, pointed out to

* It is, however, the general opinion, that the aborigines of Greece were the descendants of Javan, the grandson of Noah. Potter Archæol. Græca, vol. 1, ch. 1.

the sagacious and intelligent Greeks the necessity of political union. In the year 1522, A.C., a league of mutual friendship and defence was planned by the wisdom of Amphyction, one of those enlightened men, whom Providence raises up for the benefit of their country. The principal Grecian states, without the Corinthian isthmus, entered into this political confederacy, and twice every year sent deputies to Thermopylæ, the place appointed for their meeting. These representatives were invested with full powers to deliberate and resolve on every subject that related to the common interest.* In order to cement this political union it was sanctioned by the authority of religion, and strengthened by the veneration which it inspires. The Amphyctionic council, or general assembly of the Grecian states, was charged with the protection of the oracle of Delphos,‡ and the instalment of the delegates was performed with a number of religious ceremonies.†

The early history of Greece is so enveloped in fable, that it is often impossible to distinguish fiction from fact. The achievements of Hercules, Perseus, &c. are, from their improbability, inadmissible in history: those of Theseus rest on a somewhat better foundation. The relation of the Argonautic expedition, though apparently founded on fact, is so blended with fable and metaphor, that the learned could never yet agree in its explanation. But without noticing these allegorical minutiæ, it suffices for our present purpose to observe, that the Greeks appear by this enterprize to

* Strabo, lib. 9 —Leland's Hist. Philip of Macedon, preliminary dissertation.

† Strabo, ubi supra.

‡ Potter's Archæologia Græca, vol. 1, ch. 16.

have

have first opened to themselves the commerce of the Euxine, and to have established colonies on its coasts.*

The history of Laconia is traced to Lelex, the head of the tribe of the Leleges, the first possessors of that country, whose reign chronology has fixed about 1,500 years before the Christian æra.† Lacedemon, one of his successors, gave to the kingdom of Laconia his own name, and to its capital that of Sparta, in honour of his consort. The other states of Greece were gradually formed and improved. The constitution of Athens was new modelled by Theseus; and that city, which has illuminated the world by her science, already began to emerge from obscurity.‡ The Trojan war is the most conspicuous event in the early history of Greece; and the achievements of her heroes are illustrated by Homer's classical pen. But although history ought to be the basis of an epic poem, the latter is too loose a foundation for history.

After a multitude of revolutions in the Grecian states, Lycurgus formed for Sparta the most singular constitution that mankind ever knew. It has already been observed, that he took for his model that of Crete, which had preceded Greece in early civilization.§ The laws of Lycurgus have, in all ages, had their encomiasts; but if the happiness of the people be the only rational object of political government, no system could be more hostile to the welfare of mankind.‖ Female delicacy, conjugal fidelity, parental

* Pliny's Hist. Nat. lib. 6, cap. 3.

† Parian Chron. Euseb. Chron.

‡ Plutarch in Theseo.

§ Polybius, however, remarks many important differences between the constitutions of Sparta and Crete. The latter had money, and no equal division of lands. Polyb. lib. 6, extract 3.

‖ Polybius is profuse in his encomiums on the Spartan institutions, but forgets to mention the most condemnable parts, lib. 6, ext. 3

affection,

affection, and all the tender sentiments of humanity, were sacrificed to an imaginary idol, dignified by Lycurgus with the sacred name of patriotism. Forgetful that private happiness, which cannot subsist without an affectionate discharge of the social duties, is the only solid foundation of public virtue and national prosperity; he established a system which annihilated all the comforts of domestic life. The Spartan and the patriot swallowed up every inferior relation. In forming a community of soldiers, Lycurgus forgot that they were citizens; in forming citizens, he forgot that they were men. By prohibiting the use of gold and silver, he cut the sinews of commerce, and disabled the Spartans from ever establishing a strong maritime power, or an extensive empire.* The grand defect and inconsistency of the system of Lycurgus appears in this, that although his only object was to form a nation of politicians and warriors, his institutions were calculated solely for defence; and after so many sacrifices, the Spartans never rose to any remarkable height of national greatness.

The great legislator of Athens, on the contrary, framed a constitution calculated for the production of political greatness, without being hostile to private happiness. In reforming the government of Athens, and new modelling its laws, Solon left an open prospect to hope and emulation. He divided the free citizens into three classes, to whom he annexed particular privileges; but these were regulated by a census of property; and a citizen of the inferior classes might, by industry and frugality, raise himself to a superior rank, and consequently to all the honours

* For the Spartan government and laws, see Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus.

and

and emoluments of the state.* Although the constitution framed by Solon was sometimes infringed by the factions, which frequently reigned in the city, Athens flourished a long time under its influence. One of her most violent civil commotions originated in the ambition of Pisistratus, who, having by stratagem, obtained liberty to form a guard for the security of his person, seized on the government. He was succeeded by his two sons, Hipparchus and Hippias, of whom the former being slain, the latter was expelled from Athens, and forced to retire into Persia. The series of wars which Persia carried on against Greece, and which ultimately terminated in the conquest of that mighty empire by Alexander, will be concisely related in the historical view of the Persian monarchy. Here we shall only observe, that the losses which the Athenians suffered from the invasion of Xerxes, were productive of one great advantage. Being driven from the land, and obliged to seek safety on board of their fleet, they directed their attention so greatly to maritime affairs, that after the expulsion of the Persians, they were sole lords of the sea; and having either reduced the other Grecian states to subjection, or awed them into a confederacy, they went on conquerors to the borders of Egypt. In the midst of prosperity, however, the Athenians were constantly agitated by factions. But the Peloponnesian war was a calamity of a different kind, which caused a temporary annihilation of their power, and threatened its total extinction. Lysander, the Lacedemonian admiral, having taken or sunk

* Plutarch in Solone.

almost

almost their whole fleet,* joined their forces to those of Agis and Pausanias, the two kings of Sparta, and marched directly to Athens, which was obliged to surrender on the hard condition of demolishing the walls that united the city with the Pyræus, or harbour. Lysander also compelled the Athenians to alter the form of their government, by changing their democracy into an oligarchy.† But a body of fugitive citizens, under the command of Thrasybulus, expelled the thirty tyrants, who formed the oligarchal government, and freed their country from the heavy yoke of the Lacedemonians. Conon, by a signal victory over the Spartan fleet, regained the sovereignty of the seas, and re-established Athens in her former power and pre-eminence.‡ In this state she continued for some time the most potent city of Greece, till the Thebans, under the conduct of Epaminondas, gave a check to her grandeur, and disputed her sovereignty.§ The contest, however, was soon decided, by the death of that illustrious commander. With Epaminondas the Theban power arose, and with him it fell, exhibiting a striking example of the influence which the courage and conduct of one man may have on the destinies of nations. After the death of this great commander, and the fall of the Theban power, the Athenians were left without a rival. As there was no other people, whose power they could fear, or whose virtues they could emulate, they domineered,

* It is to be observed, that the Spartans had now, in many respects, departed from the institutions of Lycurgus, which were adverse to naval war.

† Plutarch in Lysandro.

‡ Id, in Conone.

§ Id. in Epamind.

without

without opposition, over Greece, and soon were enervated by luxury, the usual concomitant of wealth and uninterrupted prosperity. They degenerated from the virtues of their ancestors: military exercises were neglected: the public revenues, which used to be employed in paying the fleets and armies, were expended in games and sports, and lavished, with profusion, in sumptuous entertainments and splendid preparations for festivals. Patriotism became a word without meaning: the love of their country was superseded by the love of money: their statesmen were corrupt, and their orators venal. This degeneracy of the Athenians, which spread through all the other Grecian states, lulled them into an ideal security, and afforded to Philip, king of Macedonia, an opportunity of raising his kindom from an obscure condition, to the empire of Greece and Asia. The design was projected by Philip, and executed by his son, Alexander.

Philip, who had been educated in letters under the ablest masters, and trained to arms under the banners of Epaminondas and Pelopidas, the greatest generals of the age, had received from nature all the prudence and courage necessary for forming the statesman and the soldier. But an insatiable ambition caused him to grasp at universal monarchy; and he made no scruple in the choice of the means which might be conducive to the attainment of his object. By a series of successful wars, and a train of unprincipled politics, he obtained the sovereignty of Greece. Every kind of political machination, every engine of force and fraud, was used for the accomplishment of his designs; and abundance of bribes were, for this purpose, dispersed among the factious leaders of the Gre-

cian cities. The Athenians, and the other Greeks, made a feeble opposition to his victorious arms; but their total defeat at the battle of Chæronea, put an end to the glory and liberties of Greece.* In order, however, to prevent any commotions in Europe, which might disconcert his plan of the conquest of Asia, and to strengthen his army by the accession of their forces, he left them their form of government and a shadow of liberty, while he was actually their sovereign. By this masterly policy, he was unanimously chosen captain-general of the confederate army of Greece, which he united to that of Macedonia, in order to accomplish his grand object, the conquest of the Persian empire. But Philip being taken off by assassination in the midst of his warlike preparations, they immediateiy revolted against his son, Alexander, but were soon reduced to subjection.† On the death of that conqueror, at Babylon, the Athenians being joined by some others of the Grecian states, declared open war against the Macedonians; but being defeated by Antipater, he compelled them to receive a garrison, changed their government into an oligarchy, and transplanted a great number of the refractory citizens into Thrace. The popular government was restored by Demetrius Poliorcetes, who bestowed on them many other signal favours. The Athenians, in return, conferred on this prince, and his father, Antigonus, the titles of deliverers and tutelar deities, decreed them divine honours, appointed lodging for Demetrius in the temple of Minerva, and erected an altar where he had alighted from his chariot. Notwithstanding, however, these effusions of flattery, the

* Plutarch in Philipo.

† Plutarch in Alexandro.

benefactor

benefactor of Athens found that gratitude is not a republican virtue. The Athenians had been invariably ungrateful to their most worthy citizens; and a stranger could scarcely expect more favourable treatment. When Demetrius began to experience adversity, he was no longer their god. They basely deserted him, and refused him entrance into their city. But being embroiled in civil dissentions, they fell a second time under his power, and experienced his generosity, in his forgiveness of their ingratitude. On this occasion, Demetrius having learned from their inconstancy, not to repose in them too great a confidence, placed three garrisons in Athens; one in the castle of Munychia, another in the Musæum, and a third in the Pyræus. In this state of perpetual fluctuation, sometimes contending for liberty with the Macedonian kings, and sometimes in subjection to their power, the Athenians, and other Greeks, continued, till they placed themselves under the protection of the Romans, and consequently became their subjects.

The circumstance which produced the revolution, was the war, in which the Greeks engaged against Philip II. king of Macedonia, who reduced them to great extremities, and laid waste all the country around Athens. These distresses induced them to invoke the aid of the Romans. Philip was, in consequence, obliged to abandon his enterprize; and being afterwards defeated by Q. Flaminius, left the Greeks in the ostensible possession of their liberties, of which they continued to possess the shadow, under the Roman protection. Their condition, however, although gilded with the specious name of freedom, was, in every respect, a state of subjection. According to the

the general policy of the Romans towards those nations which submitted to their power, the Greeks were governed by their own laws, and enjoyed the privilege of electing their own magistrates; but all political affairs were regulated by the Roman senate. Individual freedom was not diminished; but the national liberties were extinguished.

From this period the history of Greece is involved in that of Rome. It suffices, therefore, to observe, that until the war with Mithridates, little alteration took place. But the Athenians having revolted from the Romans, and received the troops of that prince within their walls, the city was besieged and taken by Sylla, with a dreadful massacre of its inhabitants. This was the most dreadful calamity that Athens had experienced since its capture by Lysander. The Pyræus, and the castle of Munychia, were burned to the ground, the ancient monuments were destroyed, and the walls of the city demolished. Athens, again reduced to the obedience of Rome, underwent little alteration till the reign of the emperor Adrian, who, being a man of genius and learning, had a particular affection for that city, the celebrated source of philosophy and literature, in which he had formerly resided in quality of archon. He not only conferred many privileges and benefits on the citizens, but repaired and embellished the city, and added a region of new buildings, which were distinguished by the names of Adrianopolis, and New Athens. After the division of the eastern and western empire, the history of Greece is involved in that of Constantinople. But it may be observed, that from gradual decay, and the depredations of the Goths, Athens, about the end of the fifth century, had lost all her an-

cient

cient splendor, and had nothing left remarkable but the ruins of her stately and magnificent structures.* After the capture of Constantinople by the Latins, Athens experienced various revolutions, and had many different masters till it fell under the dominion of the Turks in the year 1455. Having traced the destinies of Athens, it would be superfluous to enter into the particular history of the other Grecian states. In all of them the government was at first regal, and afterwards republican;† and their fortunes were in general similar to that of Athens, which, in extent of population, as well as in arts and arms, and political preponderancy, might be justly considered as the capital of Greece.

A subject so interesting cannot well be dismissed without taking a view of Athens, as it appeared while in the meridian of its grandeur. From Cecrops, its founder, it was first called Cecropia, and afterward Athenæ, or Athens, from the Greek name of the goddess Minerva, the protectress of the city, to whom all fortresses or citadels were sacred. Cecropia, at first the whole city but afterwards only the citadel of Athens, was seated on a high rock in the middle of a spacious and pleasant plain.‡ But in process of time, the number of inhabitants increased so much, that the whole plain was covered with buildings, and Athens filled the vast circuit of above sixteen English miles.§ The citadel was about seven miles and a half in compass, fortified with strong walls, and orna-

* Synesius ap. Potter Archæol. Græca, vol. 1. ch. 7. p. 30.

† Although Sparta had kings, the constitution was in fact republican.

‡ Archæolog. Græca, vol. 1. ch. 8. p. 32.

§ Archæolog. vol. 1, ch. 8. p. 36. Being in compass 178 stadia, or twenty-two and a quarter Roman, or something more than sixteen and a quarter English miles.

 mented

mented with nine gates. The inside was adorned with innumerable edifices, statues, and monuments, in which all the ancient stories were amply described. The principal of these structures was the Parthenion, or temple of Minerva, in the middle of the citadel; it was 217 feet nine inches in length, and ninety-eight feet six inches in breadth, constructed entirely of the most beautiful white marble; and although not in magnitude, yet in regard to the excellency both of materials and art, the finest piece of antiquity in the world.* The other remarkable buildings in the citadel, were the temples of Neptune, of Minerva the Victorious, and of Minerva the Protectress, behind which was the public treasury. Besides these, there were several chapels dedicated to Jupiter and Minerva, and also a temple of Venus. The citadel was called the Acropolis, or upper city. The lower city contained all the buildings which surrounded the citadel, with the two harbours, Phalerum and Pyræus, and the fort of Munychia, seated on a promontory not far from the latter. The north wall of the city, which extended to the Pyræus, was five miles in length: the south wall, which took in the port of Phalerum, was thirty-five stadia, or nearly three miles and a half. Upon these walls were erected a number of turrets. The wall that encompassed the castle of Munychia, and joined it to the Pyræus, was sixty, and the exterior wall on the other side of the city, forty-three stadia, making the whole circuit 178 stadia, or something more than twenty-two Roman miles.†

* Potter's Archæol. Græca, vol. 1. p. 34. on the authority of Sir G. Wheeler.

† Archæolog. Græca, vol, 1. ch. 8. p. 36. 178 stadia, are twenty-two and a quarter Roman miles, or something more than sixteen and a quarter English miles.

From

From this sketch, it will be perceived, that the original city of Cecropia, or Athens, was situated at the distance of five miles from the Pyræus, and about three miles and a half from the Phalerum, the two nearest points of the coast, and that in process of time it was extended quite to the sea. The Pyræus was the principal port. Its arsenal cost the republic a sum equivalent to 216,000*l.* sterling. Athens, while in the height of her naval greatness, had here four hundred gallies of three ranks of oars.* The lower city contained innumerable edifices of singular beauty and magnificence; the principal of which was the temple dedicated to Jupiter Olympius. This was the most superb structure in Athens, being no less than four stadia, or about half a mile in circuit.† The pantheon, or temple of the gods, was also a magnificent edifice, supported by 120 marble pillars. The outside was adorned with the mythological histories of all the Grecian deities, represented in excellent sculpture; and on the great gate stood two horses, the workmanship of the celebrated Praxiteles. The other temples were too many to be particularly mentioned. Numerous porticos were also seen in every part of the city: one of these in particular, in which Zeno taught philosophy, was adorned with a variety of curious pictures by the greatest masters. There were also a great number of theatres and gymnasia. the latter are said to have originated at Lacedemon; They were common, however, in all the cities of Greece. The gymnasia of Athens, like those of Rome, were

* Thucyd. de bello Pelopon. lib. 2. cap. 13.

† Archæolog. Græca, vol. 1. ch. 8. p. 38. It was of the Corinthian order, and considered as a model of perfection in that style of architecture. Vetruvius, lib. 7.

not single edifices, but consisted of an assemblage of buildings, sufficiently capacious to receive many thousands of people; and so constructed, that the philosophers the rhetoricians, and the professors in all other sciences, could read their lectures, while the wrestlers, dancers, &c. performed at the same time their exercises, without the least interruption or disturbance.* The principal of these gymnasia were the lyceum, consecrated to Apollo, and the academus, so called from a Grecian hero of the fabulous age. The lyceum was the place where Aristotle taught philosophy, and established the sect of Peripatetics. The academus was without the city, at the distance of about a mile and a half from its walls, and was beset with shady groves and solitary walks, suitable to study and meditation.† At first, it was marshy and unhealthful; but being afterwards drained by Cimon, the famous Athenian general, it became a delightful spot, and was greatly frequented by people of every description, especially such as addicted themselves to philosophical studies. Here Plato constantly read his lectures, which rendered the academic groves a place of fashionable resort, and greatly contributed to their celebrity.

The inhabitants were divided into three classes; citizens, strangers, and slaves. The citizens were the most dignified and powerful class, possessing all the powers of government; but the servants, or slaves, were far the most numerous. In the time of Cecrops, the free citizens of Attica amounted to 20,000. In the age of Pericles their number was reduced; and only 21,000 citizens with 10,000 foreigners and 400,000

* Archæolog. Græca, vol. 1. ch. 8. p. 42.

† Archæolog. Græca, ubi supra et auct. cit.

slaves, were numbered in the census instituted at the command of Demetrius the Phalarean, whom Cassander appointed governor of Athens.* Mr. Hume reasons inconsistently on the subject of this census, in first supposing that the statement, which Athenæus has given, was confined to the population of the city, and afterwards considering it as including that of all Attica.† Even in the latter and most extensive signification, he expresses an opinion that the enumeration is exaggerated. The disproportion of numbers between the citizens and slaves is such, indeed, as to excite a well founded suspicion of error; and Mr. Brougham has, by a judicious mode of reasoning, endeavoured to elucidate the subject. This intelligent author supposes, on very probable grounds, that the census of the governor, Demetrius, like all other enumerations of ancient population, having had no other object in view than to ascertain the wealth and force of the community, the statement of freemen included those only that were arrived at the age of manhood. On this principle, he concludes the whole population of Attica to have amounted to 124,000 freemen, and 400,000 slaves. Such a proportion of slaves to free people, and of inhabitants to extent of territory, is not, as our author observes, too great to be credible.‡ The city of Athens alone might have comprised, within the circuit of her walls, a population which is far short of that of London or Paris, and not equal to one-half of that of ancient Rome. We are told, indeed, that the turrets on the walls were converted into dwelling-houses

* Archæolog. Græca, vol. 1, ch. 9, p. 482.—Athenæus ap. Hume's Essays, vol. 1, p. 416.

† Hume's Essays, vol. 1, p. 416, 417.

‡ Brougham's Col. Pol. vol. 2, p. 71, note.

houses, when the inhabitants were become too numerous to be contained in the city.* But if all the inhabitants of Attica amounted to no more than 524,000, it is certain that the population of Athens was not remarkably great in proportion to its ample extent. It appears that the citadel, the temples, the gymnasia, and other public edifices, had occupied a considerable part of the ground in the city. The most probable estimate might fix the number of inhabitants at about 400,000: for, as Attica was neither extensive nor fertile, Athens may reasonably be supposed to have comprised more than four-fifths of the whole population. No historical documents exist, from which we can estimate the general population of Greece. Its whole territory was about equal to England in extent, and probably not greatly different in population.†

But the most splendid picture that ancient Greece affords, is her rapid progress in letters and science, in all the refinements of thought, and the embellishments of the mind. The Greeks had, at an early period, emerged from a savage state; but during many ages they remained semi-barbarians. Such they were in the Trojan war, and such they continued for 700 years after that period. Previous to the age of Moses, political communities were formed, and civil government was established in Greece. According to the generally received chronology, Cecrops, the founder of Athens, and Cadmus, who introduced the Phœnician alphabet, were contemporary with the Hebrew legislator; but, until about 600 years before the Christian æra, a period which nearly coincides with the com-

* Archæol. Græca, vol. 1, ch. 8, p. 36.

† See Dr. Russel's estimate of the extent of Greece. Hist. Ancient Europe, vol. 1, p. 147.

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mencement of Nebuchadnezzar's reign in Babylon, the Greeks were far behind the Egyptians and some of the Asiatics, in the sciences which illuminate the human mind, and the arts which embellish the world. About that time, Thales of Miletus travelled into Egypt, and being instructed by the priests of Memphis, was the first of the Greeks who learned to calculate an eclipse, or who appears to have understood the nature of that phœnomenon. It is certain that the Greeks borrowed the rudiments of their knowledge from the Egyptians and the Babylonians. Until this foreign intercourse commenced they had no accurate division of time. And the father of Grecian history informs us, that his countrymen learned from the Babylonians the use of the sun-dial, and the division of the day into hours.* The Greeks, however, turned to the greatest possible advantage the instructions which they received from foreigners. They made the attainments of all nations their own, and engrossed all scientific and literary reputation. Before the commencement of the Persian wars, Greece had made a rapid progress in arts and in arms, and had established her colonies on the coasts of Asia Minor, in Italy, Sicily, and the islands of the Egean and Ionian Seas. The Grecian armies consisted chiefly of free citizens, whom the laws obliged, when arrived at a certain age, to appear in arms at the summons of the chief magistrate. The Athenians were appointed at the age of eighteen to guard the city, but were not sent to foreign war till twenty, and the Spartans seldom before the age of thirty. The soldiers were all maintained at their own expence. Pericles was the first who introduced at Athens the custom of

* Herodot. lib. 2, cap. 109.

giving pay to the army.* Slaves and strangers were not permitted to serve in the armies, except in cases of extreme necessity and danger. The slaves, who on any great emergency were called to bear arms, were, in consequence, emancipated. By exactness of discipline, and a judicious distribution of rewards and punishments; by well timed military harangues, and by every means that could inspire the soldiers with courage, the Grecian armies were rendered superior to those of every other nation with whom they had to contend.†

During the period under consideration, Greece advanced in arts in proportion to her progress in arms. But the advances of refinement were unequal in the different states. The liberal arts first began to disclose themselves to advantage in the Grecian colonies of Asia Minor and the isles of the Egean Sea. There architecture first displayed her beauties, in just proportions of unity and design; and the Dorians and Ionians, on the Asiatic coasts, invented those elegant orders that still bear their names. In their progress they were eagerly imitated, and at last even excelled by Corinth. Enriched at an early period by merchandise, and habituated to an extensive intercourse with foreigners, the Corinthians, surpassing all the other states of Greece in opulence, indulged themselves in the delicacies of Asiatic luxury, and imitated the pomp of oriental magnificence.‡ Their city was filled with temples, theatres, porticos, and palaces,

* Ulpianus ap. Archæolog. Græc. vol. 2, ch. 2.

† For the military discipline, arms, encampments, &c. of the Greeks, see Archæolog. Græca. vol. 2, book 3.

‡ Corinth, favourably situated on the isthmus which unites the Morea, or Peloponnesus to Greece, and having a harbour on each side, was early distinguished for wealth and commerce. Thucyd. lib. 1, cap. 1.

equally

equally admirable for the costliness of their materials and the elegance of their structure. The Corinthian order, the most superb in architecture, was there invented, and adorned their public buildings with columns, &c. of the most exquisite workmanship. The Athenians, although less wealthy than the Corinthians, discovered an equal, or even a superior taste. All the arts and sciences flourished in Athens, and gave her a lasting celebrity. The Elians enriched, as well as polished, by the periodical celebration of the Olympic games, made early advances in the arts of elegance.* The superb temple of Jupiter Olympius, erected by Libon, a native of Elis, about 600 years before the Christian æra, exhibited a striking proof of their early proficiency.† This celebrated fane was of the Doric order, and built entirely of a most beautiful marble, resembling that of Paros, and surrounded with a colonnade of the same materials. Its magnitude, however, was not remarkable, being only 68 feet in height, 95 feet in breadth, and 230 in length. The magnificence of the decorations equalled the elegance of the structure. The arts and sciences made rapid advances towards perfection in all the Grecian states, except Lacedemon, where they were slowly progressive, and never attained to so high a pitch of refinement as in other parts of Greece. Sparta, says a modern author, hedged round by the austere institutions of Lycurgus, and, in a manner, excluded from all intercourse with foreigners, was backward in adopting the improvements most intimately connected with the happiness of human life.‡ The maxims of policy and

* Strabo, lib. 8. † Russel's Ancient Europe, vol. 1, p. 383.

‡ Russel's Anc. Eur. vol. 1, p. 381.—Plutarch in Lycurg.

war,

war formed the literary code of the Lacedemonians, and the sole objects of their education.

From the time of the invasion by Xerxes till the age of Philip of Macedon, a period including more than a century, the progress of the Greeks in letters and arts was such as excited the admiration of all posterity. No age or country had, before that period, been adorned and illuminated by such a constellation of philosophers, orators, historians, poets, and artists.* Those of Athens, in particular, shone with distinguished brilliancy. Their literary compositions, and their exquisite works of art, have fixed the standard of eloquence and taste to all succeeding generations. After the decline of her political greatness, Greece, in subjection to the Romans, long maintained her literary pre-eminence. Her illustrious masters resorted to her schools for instruction, and Rome was indebted to Athens for the elegant enjoyment and magnificent display of the wealth and greatness acquired by her arms.

Having sketched the fortunes of Athens from the earliest period to the termination of her national existence, and the last setting of her sun, in the obscurity of Turkish despotism, it is requisite to resume the historical narrative, in order to exhibit a general view of the state of the European part of the Ottoman dominions, after the final separation of the eastern and western empires. The countries here under consideration, had long before that period been subdued by the Romans, and made a part of their vast empire. They afterwards constituted a portion of the empire of the East. which, after a variety of success and mis-

* See Pliny's account of the painters of Greece, Hist. Nat. lib. 35, cap. 10.

fortunes,

fortunes, such as are common to nations, was carried to a high pitch of glory and grandeur by the emperor Justinian. This prince by his generals Belisarius and Narses, conquered the Gothic and Vandalic kingdoms of Italy and Africa, regulated the proceedings of justice by establishing the famous code of civil law, and adorned many cities of the empire with numerous and splendid edifices, of which the celebrated mosque of Sancta Sophia at Constantinople, still remains a magnificent memorial of his reign. Within less than a century after his death, not only his conquests were lost, but all the African, and most of the Asiatic part of the empire were, by the Arabian Caliphs, wrested from the throne of Constantinople.*

The Eastern empire retained in Asia only a few provinces on the coasts of the Euxine. The rest of its territory was circumscribed within the limits of what is now called European Turkey, nor did it, indeed, comprize the whole of that country. The Bulgarians continued a long time independent, and were frequently the scourge of Thrace, as well as the terror of the imperial city.† I shall not here enter into a particular narrative of the reigns of those Eastern emperors, who were most of them unworthy of the purple, and who reigned over a people as vicious as themselves. The Greek emperors, indeed, with a very few exceptions, deviated from the virtues of the Great Constantine, whose successors and representatives they were, as much as their subjects had degenerated

* See the Historical Articles of Egypt, Africa, and Ottoman dominions in Asia.

† The Bulgarians were subdued by the Greek emperor Basil II, and regained their independence in the reign of Isaac Angelus. Gibbon Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 11, p. 183.

ated from those of the Romans, whose name they assumed. The whole history of the Byzantine empire, exhibits a picture of political and moral deformity, interspersed with only a few traits of a different complexion. The principal military transactions that it records, are the bloody wars with the Caliphate, which continued, at intervals till the fall of the Arabian power gave rise to that of the Turks, an enemy that at first appeared less formidable, but eventually proved more fatal to Constantinople. The most interesting circumstance of a religious nature, is the grand schism which arose between the Greek and Latin churches. This division of the church was a very natural consequence of the division of empire, and originated in the jealousies which reigned between the primates of the east and the west. The nations of western Europe had received their religion from Rome, and readily submitted to her authority. But the prelates, the clergy, and people of Constantinople, were of a temper less flexible. They could scarcely deem it reasonable that the city of the Great Constantine, the flourishing metropolis of Christianity and of the empire, should implicitly obey the religious mandates of Rome, a city which they considered as possessed by barbarians. Many circumstances concurred to foment the religious dissention. The proceedings of the Iconoclasts of the east, had given great umbrage to the Christians of the west. The Bulgarians had been converted to Christianity about the middle of the ninth century, and each of the two primates of the east and the west claimed this new accession to the church, as a part of his jurisdiction. The council of Constantinople, in 879, gave judgment in favor of the patriarch, but the pope protested against

against the decision. The two primates thundered their excommunications against each other, and although many attempts were made by the emperors to unite the Greek with the Latin church, they all proved unsuccessful. The schism continued, and the Greeks imbibed an irreconcileable enmity against the Roman church. This religious animosity, as we shall hereafter have occasion to observe, greatly contributed to facilitate to the Turks the conquest of the Byzantine empire.

In reviewing the long series of weak and worthless emperors, who, during the long period of about 700 years, from Justinian to Constantine Paleologus, we meet with a few who were distinguished by their abilities. The exploits of Heraclius against the Persians, will be mentioned in relating the revolutions of Asiatic Turkey. Leo the Philosopher, was a lover and promoter of learning; and the reign of his son Constantine Porphyrogenitus, which commenced A.D. 912, and terminated in 959, may be regarded as the flourishing æra of Byzantine literature. His celebrated work, exhibiting an accurate account of the state of the empire, is a valuable literary monument; and he not only encouraged the sciences by liberal rewards, but rendered the study of them fashionable by his example. Nicephorus Phocas, who reigned from 961 to 969, was victorious over the Saracens, and recovered from them Antioch, the island of Cyprus, and several other places; but being detested for his avarice and tyranny, his wife entered into a conspiracy formed against him, and he fell by assassination. John Zimisces, one of the assassins, seized the empire, and delivered it from the invasion of the Russians, whom he defeated in several engagements.

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This brave prince being taken off by poison in 975, was succeeded by Basil II, who was also a warrior. The Comnenian dynasty which commenced in the eleventh, and filled up the space of the twelfth century, produced some able princes, Manuel Comnenus, contemporary with Richard I. king of England, and Philip Augustus of France, was distinguished for his dauntless courage and herculean strength; and it was said, that no other man of that age was able to bend the bow of the Greek emperor. Andronicus, his successor, was also a man of extraordinary abilities, and not less celebrated for the romantic adventures of his life, than for his active valour and the beauty of his person. But his reign was tyrannical and short, and its termination tragical. Falling a victim to popular fury in a general insurrection at Constantinople, he was massacred with the most shocking circumstances of cruelty. The revolution which cast him headlong from the throne, was the prelude to another, which transferred the empire of the Greeks to the French and Venetians. This was the greatest shock that Constantinople ever suffered, from its foundation by Constantine to its capture by Mahomet II. The empire, indeed, revived after a temporary extinction; but it never recovered its former greatness, nor the city its ancient splendor.

After the tragical death of Andronicus, Isaac Angelus, a nobleman whom the tyrant had doomed to destruction, was immediately proclaimed emperor, and the enormous expenditure of his court exceeded almost all examples of imperial luxury. The number of eunuchs and domestics amounted to 20,000, and the sum of 4,000,000*l.* sterling was annually consumed

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in the expences of his household and table.* Such a scene of extravagant luxury could be supported only by oppression; and the public discontent was inflamed by equal abuses in the collection and the application of the national revenue. The throne of the luxurious emperor, however, was for some time supported by fortune, or the merit of his servants, but was at last overturned by the ambition of a brother. While the emperor was indulging himself in the pleasures of the chace, Alexius Angelus was invested with the purple. The unfortunate Isaac being pursued and taken, was deprived of sight and confined in a dungeon.† But his young son Alexius, only twelve years of age, made his escape to Sicily, and from thence going to Italy implored the protection of Pope Innocent III. Proceeding from Rome to Venice, he there met a large body of French and Flemish croisaders, who were going on an expedition to Palestine. To this military force the navy of Venice was about to be joined; and the assemblage of such a formidable power by land and by sea, revived the hopes of the Byzantine prince. By a promise of liberal rewards, and of uniting the Greek to the Roman church, the young Alexius engaged the barons of France, Flanders, and Italy, in conjunction with the republic of Venice, to undertake his restoration and his father's deliverance. A considerable number, however, of the croisaders, regarded the invasion of a Christian empire as a breach of their vow, while others perhaps were appalled at the report of the naval power, and impregna-

* Gibbon Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 11, p. 182.

† The Bulgarians who had been reduced under the dominion of the Greek empire by Basil II. revolted, and regained their independence under Isaac Angelus. Gibbon, vol. 11, p. 183.

ble strength of Constantinople. Some of the most distinguished pilgrims, therefore, actuated by the dictates of conscience, or the impulse of fear, refused to join in an attack on that celebrated capital of the east. This defection, however, did not prevent the success of the expedition. An adventurous and determined band, conducted by Baldwin, earl of Flanders, and Henry, his brother, with many other French and Flemish barons, and Boniface, marquis of Montserrat, one of the most illustrious of the Italian nobles, who had signalized his valour on various occasions, embarked on board the Venetian fleet, commanded by Henry Dondola, the doge, one of the greatest heroes of the age. The Adriatic had seldom borne such an armament. While the Greek usurper, infatuated with imperial splendor, immersed in luxurious pleasures, and lulled into a fatal security by the flatteries of his parasites, affected to despise the feeble attempts of the Latins, the Venetian flag was displayed before Constantinople. His resources were immense had they been called into exertion. The Greeks, it is true, were unwarlike, but they were numerous, and under his absolute command. Constantinople alone is supposed, at that time, to have contained 1,000,000 of inhabitants, and to have been able to raise 60,000 horse, besides a great number of foot soldiers.* Its naval power, also, far exceeded every thing of the kind seen in other parts of the world in that age. The number of fishing-boats alone, amounted to 1,600. From these, as a modern author observes, might have been manned a fleet of sufficient force to have sunk that of Venice in the Adriatic, or at least to have

* Le Beau Hist. du Bas Emp. tom. 20, p. 417, &c.

stopped its passage through the Hellespont.* Constantinople also possessed innumerable ships of war and merchant vessels.† But all this force was rendered useless by the negligence of the monarch and the venality of the ministers, especially the great duke or admiral, who had sold the sails, the masts, and the rigging of the imperial navy.‡ The invaders were suffered to land with little opposition; and the emperor shut himself up in his capital. The Venetians, by a desperate effort, broke the boom or chain that barred the entrance of the harbour, and either took or sunk twenty ships of war, the relics of the Grecian navy. The city was assaulted by the French on the land side and by the Venetians from the harbour. In the midst of the conflict, the doge, a venerable old warrior, above eighty years of age and blind, stood conspicuous in complete armour on the prow of his galley. The great standard of St. Mark was displayed before him; and his promises, threats, and exhortations, urged the assailants. He was even the first warrior on the shore; and the nations admired the magnanimity of the blind old man, without reflecting, as Mr. Gibbon observes, that his age and infirmities diminished the value of life and enhanced that of immortal glory. The banners of Venice were already displayed on the rampart, when the doge was obliged to relinquish his advantage, and fly to the assistance of the confederates, whose six diminutive battalions were surrounded by sixty squadrons of the Greek cavalry, each of which was more numerous than the largest of their divisions. Shame and despair had impelled the usurper to the

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 11, p. 209.

† Gunther's Hist. C. P. cap. 8, p. 10, apud Gibbon, ubi supra.

‡ Gibbon, ubi supra, on the authority of Nicetas.

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last effort of a general sally; but after some skirmishing, he retired towards evening into the city, and basely deserting his family, his fortune, and his people, made his escape, in the night, from Constantinople. The Greek nobles were no sooner apprised of his flight, than the blind Isaac was drawn from his dungeon, where he hourly expected the visit of the executioner, and replaced on the throne; and the young Alexius was solemnly crowned with his father in the church of St. Sophia. This event produced a short peace between the Latins and the Greeks. The suburb of Galata, or Pera, was assigned for the quarters of the French and Venetians, and a familiar intercourse was established between the two nations.

The enmity of the Greeks towards the Latins, however, had not subsided. The two emperors were extremely unpopular. Isaac was despised for his former vices and mal-administration, while the young Alexius was hated as an apostate from the religion of his country. The secular clergy, the monks, and the people, were superstitiously attached to their creed, and abhorred the tyranny of the pope. When the treaty which Alexius had concluded with the Latins at Venice was known, the proposed union of the Greek and Latin churches excited an universal indignation and alarm. A destructive conflagration, which burned for eight days, and consumed the most populous regions of the city, was attributed to the Latins, who disclaimed the charge, increased the animosity between the two nations. The Latins, who were settled in Constantinople, consulted their safety in a hasty retreat from the city, to the protection of their standard in the suburb of Pera. All friendly intercourse ceased: the money which Alexius had stipulated to

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pay for his restoration was peremptorily demanded by the barons; and hostilities appeared inevitable.

The Greeks of Constantinople, how cowardly soever they might be in war, were always furious in sedition. The nobles and clergy began to conspire, and the people began to arm. Every convent, every house and street, resounded with invectives against the Latin nations, the Roman church, and the apostate emperor. All authority was overborne by the impetuous multitude, who, mistaking rage for valour, numbers for strength, and fanaticism for celestial inspiration, clamourously surrounded the senate, and demanded the election of a new emperor. Amidst these tumultuous proceedings, Alexius Mourzouste, of the family of Ducas, seized the persons of the two emperors, and having put them to death, ascended the vacant throne. While history commemorates, humanity must deplore, the fate of the young Alexius, whose situation at the immature age of seventeen, was so encompassed with difficulties, that the greatest abilities of the most dexterous policy would have been insufficient to steer him through the tempest, which overwhelmed his person and government.

The death of the emperors, and the usurpation of Mourzouste, rendered the renewal of the war inevitable. The usurper laboured assiduously to put the city in the best state of defence. Two vigorous and well conducted attempts were made by the Greeks to burn the enemy's fleet in the harbour; but the courage and skill of the Venetians repulsed the fire-ships. The new Greek emperor also made a nocturnal sally, but was repulsed by Henry, the brother of the count of Flanders; and near three months were consumed in skirmishes and preparations, before the Latins gave

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the general assault. The fortifications on the land side had, in the first siege, been found impregnable. It was therefore determined to give the assault from the harbour. In a line of about a mile and a half in length, the city was assaulted in more than 100 places at once, and a bloody conflict was sustained, till superiority of numbers, with the advantage of situation, finally prevailed, and the assailants were obliged to sound a retreat. On the following day, the attack was renewed with equal ardor, but no better success. In the night the barons held a council of war, and resolved on a third assault, which decided the fate of Constantinople. The bishops of Troyes and Soissons led the van, and at last the episcopal banners were displayed on the walls. The Greeks fled precipitately into the city: the Latins pursued, and either accident or design caused another conflagration, so rapid in its progress, and so destructive in its effects, that in a few hours a great part of Constantinople was consumed. At the close of the evening, the barons checked the ardour of their troops, and fortified their station, as the vast extent and population of the city, with the strength of the churches and palaces, might still have rendered its reduction a difficult task, and even a fatal attempt to an enemy dispersed in its vast circuit, and implicated in the labyrinth of its numerous streets. But while the Latins were concerting the plan of their future operations, a suppliant procession, with crosses and images, announced the submission of the Greeks; and the usurper, Mourzouste, was so fortunate as to make his escape.

The august and hitherto supposed impregnable city of Constantinople, which had withstood the rèiterated attack of the Saracens, the Alvars and other barbarians,

rians, was stormed and taken by about 20,000 Flemish, French, and Italian adventurers, in the year 1204, and for the first time fell a prey to foreign conquest, about 870 or 880 years after its foundation.* The city was given up to plunder, and the booty exceeded the largest scale of experience and expectation. The whole was equally divided between the French and the Venetians; and 50,000 marks being deducted from the share of the former for the payment of debts due to the latter; the remainder amounted to 400,000 marks of silver, or about 800,000*l.* sterling, a sum nearly equal to seven times the annual revenue of the crown of England in that age.† According to this statement, the whole value of the visible and ascertained plunder must have been about 1,800,000*l.* or fifteen times the national revenue of England. And it is generally believed, that although the Latins were obliged, under the tremendous penalties of excommunication and death, to deliver their plunder into the common stock, the secreted far exceeded the acknowledged part. If, besides this, we consider how great a quantity of valuable merchandise, furniture, &c. must have been destroyed in the conflagrations, we may be enabled to form some idea of the immense riches of Constantinople. This dreadful calamity, however, gave a mortal blow to her splendor and greatness. Her wealth was dissipated; her populous regions were destroyed, and her beautiful edifices defaced by fire. The literature of the Greeks had, in a great measure, centered in the capital; and genius must lament the

* The foundations of Constantinople appear to have been laid about A.D. 324, and the city to have been dedicated about A.D. 334. Gibbon.

† Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 11, p. 234.—Hume's Hist. England, vol. 2, p. 170, states the national revenue at 60,000 marks, about 120,000*l.* sterling.

 destruction

destruction of the libraries, and the loss of many of the valuable writings of antiquity, which undoubtedly perished in the conflagrations, as well as of the numerous statues of bronze, of the most excellent workmanship, which Constantine had ravished from all the cities of Greece for the purpose of adorning his capital, and which were now melted down by the ignorant and avaricious conquerors. Imagination may more easily conceive, than history can describe, the wreck of ancient learning and art, which in this first conquest of Constantinople, was probably greater than at its second capture by Mahomet II. The Turkish conquest was long foreseen and inevitable: numbers of the most illustrious and learned Greeks had previously emigrated to Italy, and introduced their language, their literature, and their valuable manuscripts into that country.* But the capture of Constantinople by the French and Venetians was a sudden and unexpected event, which afforded no such opportunity of obviating its consequences.

This stupendous revolution, one of the most extraordinary that occurs in the history of the middle ages, was immediately followed by the division of the plunder and the partition of the empire. The spoils of the city were divided into shares: to each foot soldier one share was allotted; two to a horseman, four to a knight, and a larger proportion to the barons and princes, according to their merit and rank. Baldwin, count of Flanders, was elected emperor of the East, and one-fourth of the empire was assigned for the imperial domain. The other three-fourths were equally divided between the barons and the republic of Venice. The barons established a government entirely feudal, on

* See Dr. Hody's Treatise de Græcis, illustribus, &c.

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the plan of that which existed in France; and the Venetians at last imitated the model. They had obtained, for their share, the maritime provinces and islands, from Ragusa to the Hellespont, besides three of the eight divisions of Constantinople. The cost of such extensive conquests exhausted their treasury, and induced them to grant to their nobles, on condition of homage as vassals of the republic, the sovereignty of such possessions as they should reduce and maintain. In this manner arose the Venetian duchy of Naxos in the noble family of Sanudo.* The fertile isle of Candia, the ancient Crete, had fallen to the share of the marquis of Montserrat, from whom it was purchased by the Venetians And the state or nobles of Venice, acting as private adventurers, having reduced the isles of the Archipelago, as well as those of Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia, the Venetians became masters of all the maritime parts of Greece;† most of which they retained until they were dispossessed by the Turks.

The conquerors of Constantinople were only a handful of men; but while they remained united in the capital, the memory of their conquest, and the terror of their arms, impressed the whole empire with awe. Their dispersion discovered the smallness of their numbers, and the defects of their discipline. In the government of the Latins, all the disorders of the feudal system prevailed. The Greeks experienced the effects of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny in the subjection of their empire to the barons, and of their church to the pope. In less than a year they re-

* The successors of Marco Sanudo were styled dukes of the Archipelago, and possessed most of the isles. Tournefort, vol. 1, letter 5.

† Du Cange. Histoire de Constantinople sous la domination des François, vol. 2, p. 6.

volted.

volted, and massacred a great number of the Latins; and the Bulgarians at the same time invading Romania, a battle was fought, in which Baldwin was taken prisoner, about eleven months after his accession to the empire, and soon after died in captivity. So short a time did the count of Flanders enjoy the prize which his valour had won, the imperial diadem of Constantinople. He was succeeded by Henry, his brother, in whose reign the celebrated Dondolo. doge of Venice, died at Constantinople, and the Marquis of Montserrat was slain in battle against the Bulgarians. Henry of Flanders, second Latin emperor of Constantinople, died in 1217, and was succeeded by Peter de Courtenay, count of Auxerre. This prince, however, had not the fortune to see the imperial city and the throne of the eastern empire. He was seized in his passage by the Greek prince of Epirus, and died in captivity.

The Greeks, on the subversion of their empire, had collected some of its fragments, and established the independent states of Epirus, Nice, and Trebisond, under princes of the former imperial dynasties. These maintained perpetual, and for the most part, successful wars against the Latin emperors of Constantinople. The reign of Robert de Courtenay, who succeeded his father, the unfortunate Peter, was a series of continual losses; and the Latin empire gave way on every side to the Greeks of Nice and Epirus. At his death, in 1228, Baldwin, his brother, had not emerged from childhood, and John de Brienne, a knight of Champaigne, and titular king of Jerusalem, was elected emperor during his minority. This monarch immortalized his name by his gallant defence of Constantinople against Vataces, the Greek prince of Nice,

Nice, and Azan, king of Bulgaria, who besieged it by land and by sea, with an army of 100,000 men, and a fleet of 300 ships of war. John de Brienne, although more than eighty years of age, rivalled the greatest heroes of antiquity, and his death deprived the Latin empire of the last of its champions. During the twenty-five years of the reign of Baldwin II. the declining empire was pressed on every side by the victorious Greeks of Nice; and the emperor solicited, with little effect, the assistance of the pope and the western nations. In the year 1261, the second of the reign of Michael Palæologus, the Greek emperor of Nice, Constantinople itself was surprized and taken by the Greeks. The Latin emperor, and the principal families, made their escape on board the Venetian gallies, which carried them into Italy; and the remaining part of his life was fruitlessly employed in soliciting the assistance of the western princes for his restoration.*

The Greek empire was, by this revolution, restored, after being fifty-seven years under the domination of the Latins. But its territories were dismembered, and a great part of its wealth annihilated. The maritime parts, as already observed, were possessed by the Venetians, and the Turkish power in Asia soon began to threaten Constantinople. The horrors of civil war exhausted the resources of the empire, and exposed it to the insults of foreign aggression. The sequel of its history presents a scene of anarchy, of political and theological factions, of religious fanaticism, national degeneracy, and progressive decay.

* In this sketch of the Latin empire, I have chiefly followed the relation of Du Cange's Hist. de C. P. sous la domination des François.

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The moral picture is that of a people immersed in superstition and luxury. The political view exhibits a weak, distracted, and ineffective government, the continual decline of the Greek, and the increase of the Ottoman power.* The principal transactions, and the final extinction of the Byzantine empire, by the capture of Constantinople in 1453, will be related in the history of the Turkish nation.

* A chronological account of the emperors of the east, from Constantine the Great, to the conquest of the empire by the Latins, fifty-nine in number, may be seen in Anderson's Genealogical Tables, 13, 14, 15. and of the five Latin, and the seven succeeding Greek emperors, ib. table 15.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE TURKS.

THE origin of the Turks is traced from the eastern and northern shores of the Caspian Sea. The number of tribes which were included in that appellation, as well as the extent of the countries which they occupied, is unknown. Nothing is more obscure than the history of those Scythian tribes—nothing more difficult than to trace their migrations. It appears, that in ancient times, they were spread from the Caspian Sea, and the Oxus and Gilson into Mongolia, and to the frontiers of China; while other barbarian hordes of Scythian origin, extended along the northern shores of the Euxine, as far as the Danube.* The Turks, like all other nations, at first were divided into different stems, of which history has faintly preserved the remembrance, and obscurely distinguished the names.† The appellation of Turks was first known about the middle of the sixth century, when that people had founded a state in the Altay mountains, along the banks of the Irtish, and acted the part of powerful allies to Heraclius, the eastern emperor, in his war

* Tooke's Russia, vol. 1. book 2. sect. 4.—Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 10. ch. 57. It appears from Mr. Tooke, that the names of Turks and Tartars are synonimous, or rather that the first is the proper appellation.

† De Guigne's Hist. des Huns, tom. 2.

with

with the Persians.* Before the end of that century, however, this Turkish state was split into two distinct parts, and afterwards dissolved into several petty khannates.† The Turks re-appearing as it were in the tenth century, two of their tribes, the Seljukians and the Turcomans, began to obtain an existence and name in history. The origin and migrations of these two branches of the Turkish nation, have received from a late French author all the illustration of which they appear susceptible.‡ But the moving picture of the Asiatic dynasties is extremely difficult to be traced, and every detail on the subject must be considered as doubtful. Towards the end of the tenth century, Sebactagi, originally a slave, had acquired the sovereign command of the city and province of Gazna, under the nominal authority of the caliph of Bagdad, and was succeeded by his son, the famous Mahmood, the first Mahomedan invader of India. The Turks, having long been employed as mercenary troops by the caliphs, had embraced the religion, and supported, or rather usurped their tottering throne. Mahmood, impelled by avarice, ambition, and fanatical zeal, made no fewer than twelve expeditions into India, and penetrated as far as the Ganges, beyond the limits of the conquests of Alexander. The invincible Mussulman was every where victorious. He spared the lives of the people; but to their religion he was inexorable. The rajahs, on payment of tribute, preserved their dominions; but hundreds of pagodas, or temples, were levelled with the ground; thousands of idols were demolished, and the precious

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom Emp. vol. 8. ch. 46.

† Tooke's Russia, ubi supra.

‡ De Guigne's Hist. des Huns, tom. 1 and 3.

materials

materials of which they were composed, were distributed among the bands of the faithful. The spoils of the temples, and the fragments of the idols, were exhibited as trophies at Gazna, Bagdad, Medina, and Mecca; and Mahmood was entitled the guardian of the throne and faith of Mahomed. He received from the caliph the title of sultan; and his kingdom was enlarged to the neighbourhood of Ispahan, and from the shores of the Caspian to the mouth of the Indus.* But the victorious sultan of Gazna, by favoring the introduction of the Turcomans into his dominions, afforded them the temptation and the opportunity of seizing his kingdom. In the reign of Massoud, his successor, their predatory bands, after harrassing all parts of his kingdom as far as Ispahan and the Tigris, at last erected the standard of defiance; and the sultan being deserted by some of his generals, was defeated and slain. The Turcomans immediately proceeded to the election of a king, and the choice falling on Togrul, the grandson of Seljuk, laid the foundation of the Seljukian dynasty, Togrul declared himself the protector of the throne of Bagdad; and the caliph, who was obliged to accommodate his politics to the revolutions of the times, named him his temporal vice-regent over the Mahomedan world. Togrul was succeeded by Alp Arslan, his nephew. This prince carried his victorious arms into Asia Minor; and Romanus, the Greek emperor, was made prisoner in a decisive engagement, but restored to liberty on paying a ransom. Alp Arslan himself was afterwards murdered on his throne in the presence of his

* Gibbon's Decl. Rom. Emp. vol. 9. p. 335. Mr. Gibbon says, that the title of sultan was first invented for Mahmood, and confutes Du Cange, who endeavours to give it a different origin and æra.

his courtiers and guards, by Joseph, the captive prince of Karismé, whose stroke was too sudden and violent to be avoided. He was succeeded by his kinsman, Malek Shah, who was one of the greatest princes of his age; Alp Arslan had achieved the conquest of Armenia and Georgia. Malek Shah extended the empire of the Turks to the Chinese frontier, and from thence to the Bosphorus of Constantinople and the extremities of Arabia. In peace and in war he was always in action, and is said to have perambulated no less than nine times his extensive dominions. In his pilgrimage to Mecca, he displayed his magnificence and piety: he enriched the citizens and pilgrims with the profusion of his alms, and established in the desert, places of rest and refreshment for those who traversed the immense solitude in order to perform their religious duties at the Kaaba. In the peaceful prosperity of his reign, the language and literature of Persia revived, at a time when Europe was plunged in ignorance and barbarism. Perhaps there may be some exaggeration in the Arabian writers, from whom D'Herbelot derives his intelligence; but when their relations are reduced to the standard of reason and fact, it appears that these four Turkish monarchs, Mahmood the Gaznavide, and the Seljukians, Togrul, Alp Arslan, and Malek Shah, are worthy of being ranked with the heroes of antiquity.*

In the person of Malek Shah, the unity and greatness of the Turkish empire expired, and three centuries elapsed before its splendour revived. On his death, which happened in 1092, the vacant throne

* For the character and reign of Mahmood, see D' Herbelot's Bib. Orient. p. 533, &c.—of Togrul, id. p. 1027, &c.—of Alp Arslan, p. 103, &c.—and of Malek Shah, id. 542, &c.

was

was disputed by his four sons, and his brother; and a series of civil wars produced a lasting division of the Seljukian monarchy. Three younger dynasties arose, which were those of Kerman, Syria, and Roum: the first commanded an extensive district on the shores of the Indian ocean; the second expelled the Arabian princes of Damascus and Aleppo, who had founded their power on the weakness of the caliphs; and the third extended its dominion over Asia Minor. The Seljukian, or Turkish empire, now divided into different branches, underwent various subdivisions and successive revolutions. Thus the empire of the Turks was twice established in Asia, and was twice dissolved by divisions and intestine commotions. Asia Minor and Syria had soon a variety of sultans engaged in almost perpetual hostilities, rising on one another's ruins, and extending their dominions at one another's expence. Their declining empire appeared to be verging to its final dissolution, when its stability was ensured, and its glory retrieved, by the famous Othman in the beginning of the fourteenth century. The Seljukian dynasty had been subverted by the Mongols, successors of Tschingis, or Zinghis Khan. The fragments of the monarchy were disputed by a number of princes, or emirs: but all of them acknowledged the supreme authority of the Great Khan. Geladdin, sultan of Karisme, had in person fought fourteen battles with the Mongols; but being oppressed by their numerous armies, he perished at last in the mountains of Curdistan, a part of the ancient Assyria. His death dissolved a veteran and victorious army, which, under the name of Karismians, comprized many Turkish hordes. Several of these military adventurers engaged in the service of the sultan of

of Iconium, one of the Turkish princes of Asia Minor.* Among these was Orthogrul, the father of Othman, the founder of a new monarchy, which became more formidable and more famous than any which the Turks had before established. The Seljukian dynasty was no more; the vast empire of the Mongols was split into numerous hostile states, and its dissolution opened a prospect to new adventurers. These circumstances were favourable to the views of Othman. He stood on the verge of the Greek empire, of which the declining and debilitated state offered him the easy conquest of its Asiatic provinces. In the year 1299, he invaded the province of Nicomedia; and during a reign of twenty-seven years, his forces were multiplied in every campaign by the accession of volunteers and captives. After age and infirmities had incapacitated him for action, he had, a little while before his death, the satisfaction of receiving intelligence of the capture of Prusa, by Orchan, his son, who was soon after his successor. From the conquest of Prusa in 1326, may be dated the commencement of the Ottoman empire. Orchan, after his accession to the throne, new-modelled his army, procured a train of battering engines, and reduced to his obedience the cities of Nice and Nicomedia, with the whole country of Bithynia, to the shores of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont. The divisions of the Greeks facilitated the Turkish conquests. Soliman, the son of Orchan, passed into Europe, and seized the town of Galipoli, on the western side of the Straits. This valiant prince was afterwards killed by an accidental fall from his horse; and the aged Or-

* For the origin of the Ottoman dynasty, see M. De Guigne's Hist. des Huns, tom. 4. p. 330, &c.

chan

chan saw his last days embittered by the funeral of his valiant son. But the scymeter was wielded with the same spirit by Amurath I, the younger son of Orchan, and brother of Soliman. The details of the Turkish history during more than a century, are obscure; but their progress was rapid, and their conquests conspicuous. Amurath subdued the whole country of Romania, or Thrace, and made Adrianople his capital. Constantinople, which had often been assaulted by the Barbarians, and as often had repelled their attacks, now saw her contracted territory surrounded by the dominions of a hostile monarchy. The Bulgarians, the Servians, the Bosnians, and the Albanians, who had so often insulted the majesty, and defied the power of the Greek empire, were wholly, or partially subdued by Amurath, who, by a prudent institution, converted his numerous captives into instruments of future conquest.* The Mahomedan law assigned him the fifth part of the spoil and of the captives. The most robust of the Christian youths were educated in the Mahomedan religion, and trained to the exercise of arms. Such was the origin of that famous body of troops called janissaries, instituted by Amurath I. and continued on foot by succeeding sultans to the present day. These janissaries soon became the best soldiers of the age, as a regular body of infantry, in constant exercise and pay, was not maintained by any of the princes of Europe. The janissaries fought with the zeal of proselytes, and the valour of veterans. In almost every encounter, their firmness and discipline commanded victory. The swords of the janissaries, however, could not protect the sultan from the determined vengeance of a Servian soldier.

* Cantomir's Hist. Ottom. Emp. p. 37, &c.

 After

After the battle of Cassova, in which he had defeated the army of the confederate Christians, as Amurath was walking over the field of battle, a soldier of the enemy suddenly starting up from among the wounded that were laid on the ground, gave him a mortal stab in the body, of which he expired. The reign of Amurath I. was glorious and successful. His conquests, however, were equalled by those of Bajazet I. his son and successor, surnamed Ilderim, or the Lightning, an epithet expressive of his character. All his enterprizes were marked with decision, and all his expeditions were performed with a rapidity, which scarcely left his opponents any time to prepare for defence. During the fourteen years of his reign, he turned his arms with equal vigour and success against the Christians of Europe and the Mahomedans of Asia. He subdued all the remaining possessions of the Byzantine empire in Greece, Macedonia, Thessaly, &c. He stripped of their dominions, the emirs of Ghermian and Caramania, the sultan of Iconium, and other Turkish princes of Anatolia, and stationed at Gallipoli a fleet of gallies, in order to command the Hellespont, and to secure the Turkish communication between Europe and Asia. Bajazet was the first of the Ottoman princes who penetrated into Hungary. In the bloody battle of Nicopolis, he defeated an army of 100,000 Christians, among whom were some of the principal barons of France and Germany. The greater part of these warriors were killed or drowned in the Danube; and Sigismund, the Hungarian monarch, escaping by the way of that river and the Euxine, to Constantinople, returned by a circuitous route to his kingdom. At the commencement of the fifteenth century, the Greek, or as it was still preposterously called, the Roman

man empire, was restricted to a corner between the Propontis and the Euxine. Its whole territory did not exceed fifty miles in length by about thirty in breadth; and this contracted spot was the theatre of religious and political factions. Bajazet, however, was about to annihilate this remnant of the Byzantine power, when the progress of another conqueror from the east called him to the defence of his own dominions. The rapid conquests of the victorious Tamerlane are elsewhere described.* The Turkish sultan had already formed the blockade of Constantinople, when he received intelligence that Tamerlane, after having captured Bagdad, Damascus, and Aleppo, had invaded Asia Minor, and was pushing his conquests towards the Hellespont. He soon saw the necessity of opposing the progress of this formidable conqueror. Historians assign to Bajazet an army of 400,000 horse and foot.

The number of Tamerlane's forces is so discordantly stated, that any attempt at a computation would be useless.† The issue of the contest, however, is certain. The decisive battle of Angora, fought in the year 1402, will ever be celebrated for the triumph of Tamerlane and the misfortune of Bajazet. The Turks were defeated with prodigious slaughter; and the sultan himself, after displaying all the energy of his character in the operations of that memorable day, was taken prisoner. The conclusion of this prince's reign, therefore, was as unfortunate as the former part of it had been happy and prosperous. The popular tale of his confinement in an iron cage is now gene-

* See Historical View of Tartary.

† See the discordant accounts of the different historians of those times in Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 12, p. 25.

 rally

rally exploded; but the fact being attested by a number of respectable writers, must be ranked in the class of historical uncertainties.* It is certain, however, that Bajazet never reascended the Ottoman throne, but died in captivity, affording a memorable instance of the inconstancy of fortune.

On the captivity and death of Bajazet, the Turkish empire was rent asunder. The Mongols had evacuated the western countries of Asia. Their armies had departed laden with spoil, but no troops were left to secure their conquests. Timur having broken the fabric of their ancient governments, abandoned the conquered nations to all the evils of anarchy. A great part of Asia Minor was restored to the emirs, from whom it had been wrested by Bajazet; and the five sons of the Ottoman monarch were eager to consume, by domestic contests, the small remnant of their patrimony. The death of Bajazet happened in the year 1403, the second of his captivity; and during the space of eighteen years, the civil wars between his sons rendered the sovereignty uncertain, and the empire a scene of anarchy. Mahomet I, the last of those sons that ascended the throne, dying in 1421, was succeeded by his son, Amurath II. But the succession was contested by Mustapha, who was considered as the last surviving son of Bajazet. Historians, however, are doubtful whether Mustapha were the real son of that monarch, or an impostor. But whoever he was, or whatever might be the merit of his pretensions, he was defeated by Ibrahim, the vizier of Amurath; and his death closed the scene of domestic hostility.†

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 12, p. 36.—Voltaire Hist. Generale, ch. 88.

† Cantemir Hist. Ottom. Emp. p. 58, &c.

During

During this enfeebled and distracted state of the Turkish empire, nothing would have been more easy to a confederacy of the Christian nations, than the annihilation of the Ottoman power, at least in Europe. A fleet of no extraordinary force would have sufficed to occupy the strait of the Hellespont, and intercept all communication between Europe and Asia. But the discord which prevailed in Christendom diverted the attention of the Latins from the generous enterprise. Had the Greeks of Constantinople, however, been animated by the spirit of the ancient Romans, of whom they considered themselves as the representatives, they would have been equal to the task of expelling the Turks without any foreign aid. But the supineness of the Greeks and other Europeans suffered the whole strength of the Ottomans to be reunited in the person of Amurath II, who, after the defeat of his rival, Mustapha, immediately laid siege to Constantinople. Animated with religious enthusiasm and the expectation of plunder, crowds of volunteers from Asia flocked to his standard. Having in view the glorious alternative of the crown of martyrdom or the spoils of Constantinople, their religious and military ardour seemed to be irresistible. The strength of the walls, however, and the bravery of their defenders, many of whom were foreign mercenaries, baffled all the assaults of 200,000 Turks. Miracles and visions, the usual instruments by which fraud works upon ignorance, were on both sides called into action, in order to animate the vulgar. The city of the cæsars bravely sustained a siege of two months, at the expiration of which term, the Greeks had the satisfaction of seeing the Ottoman standards removed from before their

 walls.

walls.* A treaty of peace was concluded; and on condition of paying an annual tribute, the shadow of the Byzantine empire was still permitted to enjoy a precarious existence. In the midst of prosperity, and crowned with success, Amurath, convinced of the transitory nature of all earthly things, abdicated his throne in favour of his son, and retired to the society of dervises, among whom the lord of the Turkish world spent his time in fasting and prayer, and in performing the extravagant ceremonies of those Mahomedan monks. But the public danger drew him from his enthusiastical, rather than philosophical retirement.† The Hungarian invasion required the presence of an experienced and victorious commander. The Roman pontiff, Eugenius, had projected a croisade against the Turks; but the coldness of the western nations for these religious wars, was not less remarkable at this period, than the headlong ardour which they had shewed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Ladislaus, king of Poland and Hungary, a young and ambitious prince, however, undertook the glorious task of delivering Europe from the threatening yoke of the Ottomans. Philip, duke of Burgundy, sent a gallant fleet from the coast of Flanders to the Hellespont; and numbers of private adventurers from France and Germany enlisted under the holy banner of the Hungarian monarch. An alliance was at the same time formed with the Greek emperor and the sultan of Caramania.* Ladislaus, passing the Danube, gained two

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 12, ch. 65, et autor. cit.

† Voltaire applauds, in the Turk, a philosophy which he would have condemned in a Christian monarch. Hist. Generale, ch. 89.

‡ Cantemir Hist. Ott. Emp. p. 88.

important

important victories, both of which are ascribed to the valour of John Hunniades, the celebrated Hungarian general, one of the greatest heroes of the age. A peace was concluded; and the contracting parties swore on the Gospel and the Koran to preserve it inviolate. But no sooner was the treaty signed, than intelligence was received that the Ottoman dominions in Anatolia were invaded by the sultan of Caramania, and Thrace by the Greek emperor. The Christians, at the instance of Cardinal Julian Cæsarini, the pope's legate, broke the truce. The Turkish monarch appealed to the justice of God, and called on Jesus, his prophet, to avenge the impious mockery of his name and religion.* In the memorable battle of Warna, he is said to have displayed, in the front of his armed legions, a copy of the treaty, as a monument of Christian perfidy. The Hungarians, however, severely felt the effects of their breach of faith in the total defeat of their army, and the loss of their king, who fell valiantly in the field. Cardinal Julian also perished, either in the battle or the pursuit; and Hunniades employed the last efforts of his courage and conduct in saving the remnant of the shattered army. Amurath having thus led the Turkish armies to victory, returned to Magnesia to fast and pray with the fanatical dervises. But these pious occupations were again interrupted by a tumult of the janissaries. The unanimous voice of the divan requested him to resume the reins of government. His presence over-awed the tumultuous soldiery, and he was reluctantly compelled to support the splendor and the fatigues of royalty till death, at the end of about four years, relieved him from the troubles and cares of that exalted station.†

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 12, p. 162.

† For the character of Amurath II, see Cantemir, p. 93.

Amurath II. was succeeded by Mahomet II, his son, who, by the double abdication of his father, had already twice tasted the cares and pleasures of royalty. From the moment of his accession he meditated the conquest of Constantinople. That imperial city, as before observed, was already surrounded by the Ottoman dominions. Both the eastern and western shores of the Bosphorus, from the suburbs of that metropolis to the entrance of the Euxine, were possessed by the Turks. Mahomet, in order to complete on that side the blockade of Constantinople, built a strong fortress on the European side of the narrowest part of the Bosphorus.* A prodigious number of masons and labourers were employed in its construction, and the sultan himself urged and directed the work with indefatigable ardour. The Greek emperor contemplated its advancement with terror, and could not but consider its towers and bulwarks as the signals of his own destruction. The Turkish monarch evidently sought a pretext for war, and such are always easily found. The Turks harrassed, with accumulated injuries, the Greeks in the vicinity of the capital. For some time the communication between the Turks and the Grecian metropolis was free and open; but at last the intentions of the sultan were so unequivocally hostile, that the gates were shut; and about the end of the year 1452, both sides began openly to prepare for war. At this tremendous crisis, Constantine Palæologus, the last of the long line of emperors, who since the time of Constantine the Great had worn the imperial purple, stood solitary in his capital, without any

* From Tournefort's description of the Bosphorus, it appears that this fortress could not be more than six miles from Constantinople, vol. 2, letter 8.

dependence

dependence on the courage of his subjects or the aid of foreigners. He implored by his prayers the assistance of heaven and earth, but as an elegant historian observes, both the invisible and the visible powers were deaf to his supplications; and Christendom beheld the fall of Constantinople with the same indifference as Constantinople had, nearly 1,000 years before, viewed the overthrow of her elder sister, Rome. Some of the European states were too weak, and others too remote, to lend any effectual assistance; and most of them were involved in endless quarrels, and actuated with perpetual jealousies. The spirit of the croisades was now extinguished; and even had it still subsisted in its ancient vigour, the inveterate animosity of the Greeks against the Latin church would have prevented the Roman pontiff from espousing their quarrel, and the western princes from arming in their cause. In regard to the interior state of Constantinople, a modern historian, who has carefully examined the original authorities, has delineated, in a masterly manner, the degrading and disgusting picture which that metropolis exhibited. Involved in unmeaning theological disputes, and actuated by religious fanaticism and enmity to Rome, the inhabitants had lost all spirit of active enterprise. The Turkish scymeter brandished before the gates of the capital, had excited in the court a spirit of prudent dissimulation. The preceding emperor, John Palæologus, with the prelates of the Greek church, had, in the moment of danger and alarm, consented to an ostensible union with the see of Rome. But the great body of the clergy and people had rejected that measure with abhorrence, the prelates abjured their new faith, and the emperor himself, before his death, renounced the union.

While

While religious fanaticism agitated the minds of the people, and the visionary hope of a miraculous deliverance sanctioned or excused their cowardice, the emperor was making preparations for the war, and calculating his means of defence. These, however, were found extremely inadequate to the danger. The Ottoman army, which laid siege to Constantinople, has, as is always the case in computations of this nature, been variously estimated in regard to its numbers. In the relations of some historians, we find them magnified to 300,000 or 400,000, and in those of others diminished to 80,000; but Phranza, one of the best informed of all those who have written on the subject, states the besieging army at 258,000; and in every point of view, his account appears the most consistent with reason and probability. But the small number of defenders would appear almost incredible, did not the state of Constantinople exhibit a people in the lowest state of degradation, and evidently shew that luxury, faction, and religious bigotry, had extinguished the spirit of patriotism, and the last sparks of martial ardour. After the most diligent enquiry, wonderful to tell! no more than 4,970 persons could be found, who were able and willing to take arms in defence of their families and their country. Some small accession of strength was derived from a body of about 2,000 strangers under the command of John Justiniani, a Genoese. The Italian mercenaries had long been the support of the falling empire of Constantinople; but a nation that neglects its own defence can never expect, in the extremity of danger, to be effectually defended by foreigners. On the 6th of April, 1453, the memorable siege of Constantinople commenced. The assaults of the Turks, although violent

and

and almost incessant, were bravely repulsed by the small number of defenders. But it was impossible that a garrison of 7,000 or 8,000 men should long defend a city, of so great extent, against so numerous a host of assailants. The Turkish sultan had spared for nothing in order to procure the ablest engineers and the most effective engines of war, whether of ancient or recent invention. He had prepared the most formidable train of artillery that had hitherto been known, and thirteen batteries thundered at once against the walls of the devoted city. Among these horrible engines of destruction, historians particularly mention a cannon of an enormous size, which ejected a stone bullet of 600 pounds weight. The circumstance has been doubted by some; but it is certain that a piece of a still greater size now guards the passage of the Dardanelles.* This piece is said to have once discharged a stone bullet of 1,100 pounds weight with 330 lb. of powder.† The amazing powers of those engines were also witnessed by the late English expedition to Constantinople.

In the first apprehension of a siege, the Greek emperor had solicited the succours of the Christian princes, but with little effect. Four Genoese vessels, however, at last proceeded with a strong south wind through the Hellespont into the Propontis, and found Constantinople invested both by land and sea. The Turkish fleet of eighteen gallies and a great number of open boats, stretched from shore to shore at the entrance of the Bosphorus. The Genoese vessels advancing with a full press of sail, assisted by the force of oars, attacked the fleet of the besiegers; and in the

* Voltaire ridicules the whole story, Hist. Gen. ch. 91.
† De Tott. tom. 3, p. 84, &c.

presence

presence of the city and camp, and of innumerable spectators, who lined the shores of Europe and Asia, gained a complete victory. The Turkish fleet was dispersed, and their loss of men was very considerable, though undoubtedly exaggerated by Phranza, who states it at 12,000 soldiers and mariners. The Christian squadron triumphantly steered up the Bosphorus, and anchored securely within the chain of the harbour. This, however, was the only attempt made by the Christian powers for the relief of Constantinople. A resistance so obstinate and so unexpected, began to exhaust the patience of Mahomet, and the reduction of the city appeared to be hopeless, unless a double attack could be made from the harbour and the land. But the harbour was inaccessible. The Genoese and Greek vessels, anchored at its mouth, formed an impenetrable barrier, which the Turks could not flatter themselves with the hopes of being able to force. In this difficulty the genius of the sultan conceived and executed the bold and decisive project of transporting by land his vessels and military stores from the Bosphorus to the higher part of the harbour. In a single night the Turkish fleet was, by the power of men and rollers, steered over the hills and plains for the space of ten miles, and launched into the shallow waters of the harbour beyond the annoyance of the larger vessels of the Greeks and Italians.* A floating-battery was immediately formed of large casks joined with rafters, linked together with iron, and covered with a floor of planks. On this platform the sultan placed one of his largest pieces of cannon, while eighty gallies with troops and scaling-ladders approached the parts which

* It must, however, be remembered, that the Turkish ships were little better than large boats.

had formerly been stormed by the French and Venetians. Forty days had now elapsed, and the fate of Constantinople began to appear inevitable. The feeble garrison was exhausted by the double attack from the land and the harbour; the fortifications were every where dismantled by the Turkish artillery, and several breaches were made. For the payment of the mutinous troops, the emperor was obliged to despoil the churches of their ornaments. The spirit of discord contributed to weaken the feeble remnant of his strength. Jealousies arose between the Greeks and their Italian auxiliaries, and the Greeks were divided into factions among themselves. Mahomet, in the meanwhile, desirous of sparing the blood of his soldiers, and of securing, unimpaired, the treasures of Constantinople, offered terms of peace and capitulation. To the prince he offered a rich equivalent, to the people a free toleration of their religion, or a safe departure. Constantine offered an annual tribute; but a sense of honour induced him to refuse the surrender of his capital, which had, during so many ages, been the imperial seat of his predecessors. After much fruitless negotiation, the sultan determined either to perish or reign in Constantinople; declared his final resolution of finding a throne within, or a grave under, its walls. And the Greek emperor, after this declaration, resolved to abide all the extremities of war. Mahomet made the most tremendous preparations for the last assault. He assembled his officers and dispersed his heralds through the camp, to proclaim the motives of the perilous enterprize. Promises and threats were profusely lavished, in order to excite courage or extinguish cowardice; and a crowd of dervises visited the tents to inspire the contempt of death, by assuring the soldiers

soldiers of the crown of martyrdom, and the joys of paradise, if they should fall in the assault. While these holy fanatics flattered them with the hopes of eternal felicity, the sultan animated them with the prospect of temporal advantages. By a solemn declaration, he resigned to the army the whole of the captives and the plunder, and reserved nothing for himself but the city. Such various and potent motives diffused among the Turks a general ardour. Every man seemed regardless of life, and impatient for action.

The people of Constantinople in the mean while execrated the obstinacy of their emperor in refusing to surrender. But while they anticipated all the horrors of their fate, nothing could rouse them to exertion. The noblest of the Greeks, and the bravest of the allies, were summoned to the imperial palace to prepare for the grand assault. The example of the monarch armed this small band of warriors with courage, but it was the courage of despair. Regardless of their families and fortunes, they devoted their lives; and each commander departing to his station, kept a vigilant watch all night on the rampart. The emperor entered the church of St. Sophia, and having prepared himself for death by devoutly receiving the sacrament, mounted on horseback to visit the guards, and observe the motions of the enemy. The Turks were strenuously employed during the night. The troops, the cannon, and fascines, were advanced to the edge of the ditch, and the prows of the gallies and the scaling ladders almost touched the less defensible walls of the harbour. On the memorable 29th of May, 1453, at day break, the general assault commenced, at once from the harbour and the land. The

 foremost

foremost ranks of the Turks ascending the walls were instantly precipitated, and the ditch was soon filled up with the heaps of slain. Under their respective bashaws and sanjiaks, the troops of Anatolia and Romania were successively led to the assault, and successively repulsed with horrible slaughter. Not a stroke of the Greeks and Italians was lost on this accumulated throng; and during the space of two hours, they maintained their advantage. But their strength and ammunition were exhausted by this desperate defence; and the number of the Turks exceeded that of the Christians in the proportion of forty or fifty to one. From the lines, the gallies and the floating battery, the Ottoman artillery thundered on the city, and the double walls were reduced to a heap of ruins. In the midst of this scene of blood, of horror and confusion, the voice of the Greek emperor was constantly heard, encouraging his soldiers to achieve, by a grand effort, the deliverance of their country. The whole vanguard of the Turks had already perished; but at this momentous crisis, the invincible janissaries advanced fresh and vigorous to the assault. Mahomet himself, with an iron mace in his hand, was the spectator and judge of their valour. He was attended by a numerous body of domestic troops and ministers of justice, who were posted behind the lines, in order to urge the assailants, and to inflict the punishment of instant death on those who should attempt to retreat. After the most desperate efforts, the ruined walls of the city were at last covered with the Turkish troops, and their brave defenders were overwhelmed by the increasing multitudes. The emperor having fulfilled all the duties of a monarch, a general, and a soldier, threw off the imperial purple, in order to avoid being known

known by the enemy, and gloriously fell in the breach amidst heaps of the slain. After his death, there was no further resistance. The Greeks fled into the city, and the victorious Turks rushed in through the different breaches. The confusion was indescribable. Multitudes were pressed or trodden to death in the narrow passages. From every quarter of the capital, the trembling inhabitants flocked in crowds to the church of St. Sophia, and sought protection from that sacred dome. If the story be true, posterity must be astonished on being told, that fanaticism had so far blinded this ill-fated people, as to induce them to give credit to the prediction of an enthusiast, who had prophesied that the Turks should indeed enter the city, and advance to the column of Constantine, in the square before St. Sophia, when an angel should descend from heaven and not only expel them from Constantinople, but also drive them from the Euphrates. This relation is extracted by Mr. Gibbon from Ducas; and how absurd soever it may appear, it must be acknowledged, that where fanaticism predominates, no extravagance of the human mind is impossible. The angel, however, did not appear, and the Turks having forced the doors, met with no resistance. The imagination may more readily conceive than language can describe, the scene that ensued. All were seized as captives, and bound together like strings of horses. All ranks and distinctious were confounded. Prelates were linked with porters, senators with slaves, and ladies of noble birth with beggars. In this condition they were driven through the streets, while their trembling pace was quickened by menaces and blows. At the same moment the pillage was general throughout the whole city. The churches

and

and monasteries, the palaces of the great, and the plebeian habitations, were ransacked, and no place, however sacred or sequestered, could afford any security to the property or persons of the inhabitants. Above sixty thousand of these devoted people were transported to the camp and the fleet, sold or exchanged like cattle, and dispersed in remote servitude through all the provinces of the Ottoman empire. Could historical enquiry follow these unfortunate victims through the subsequent scenes of distant slavery, what a collection of melancholy biography the remainder of their lives would display to the eye of compassion. While history represents to our view the sufferings of those who have long ago ceased to exist, we are inclined to consider the shortness of human life as a gracious dispensation of Providence, and to rejoice that man is not immortal.

Such was the dreadful catastrophe of the capital of the eastern empire, about 1129 years after its foundation by Constantine, and after having been through a long succession of ages the chief city in the world, unrivalled in wealth and magnificence, except, perhaps, for a short time by Bagdad, when the empire of the caliphs was in the zenith of its splendor.* In the last stage of its decline, Mr. Gibbon supposes that Constantinople could scarcely contain fewer than 100,000 inhabitants. Had its pusilanimous citizens been animated by the spirit of the ancient Romans, or had they imitated the bravery of their emperor, and his small, but courageous band of select warriors, they might have escaped their misfortunes, and seen

* Anderson reckons the duration of the eastern empire at only 1124 years after the translation of the imperial residence from Rome to Constantinople. Royal Geneal. Table, 115.

the efforts of Turkish valour vainly exhausted against their walls. Constantine Palœologus, the last of the Greek emperors, appears greater in his fall than most of his predecessors in their prosperity and splendor. The sultan respected his valour, and his body being discovered among a heap of slain, by the golden eagles embroidered on his shoes, he bestowed on him the honours of a decent funeral.

Constantinople was now naked and desolate: her prince was fallen by the sword, and her people dragged into captivity. But her incomparable situation, which marks her for the metropolis of a great empire, caused her to triumph over the accidents of fortune; and Mahomet II. established the residence of the Ottoman monarchs on the same commanding spot which Constantine had chosen for the capital of the Roman world. The cathedral of St. Sophia was converted into a mosque, the damages which the city had sustained by the siege were repaired, and the population was speedily renewed by families from Anatolia and Romania, with numerous Greeks, who flocked in crowds to Constantinople as soon as they were assured of their lives, their liberties, and the free exercise of their religion.

Having traced, by dim lights, the obscure progress of the Turks, from the remote regions of central Asia, and the frequent revolutions of their empire, from the first appearance of the Seljukian power, to the rise and establishment of the Ottoman dynasty, I have, in conformity with the general intention of this work, been somewhat explicit in relating the conquest of Constantinople, and the establishment of the Ottoman empire as an European power. This indeed is one of those important revolutions in human affairs,

 which

which are worthy of the pen of the historian, and the attention of the politician and the philosopher. To the progress of the Turkish arms, and the subversion of the Greek empire, Europe is in a great measure indebted for the revival of learning; while she has seen a new power established, which, although at present far from being formidable, and exhibiting all the symptoms of decline, has more than once excited universal alarm, and greatly influenced the politics of this quarter of the globe. The subsequent history of the Ottoman empire will require to be treated with greater brevity. Most of its principal events have already been noticed in the histories of Germany, Hungary, and Russia, with which they are chiefly connected. Those events are in general such only as are common in all political histories: wars without any decisive issue, any remarkable extension of dominion, or aggrandisement of power, and in fine, without producing any important alteration in the state of human affairs.

After the capture of Constantinople, Mahomet extended his conquests on every side. Trebisond, where a prince of the Comnenian family reigned, and still kept up a faint image of the Greek empire, was reduced under his dominion, and the last sparks of the Byzantine power were extinguished. But history cannot overlook the exploits of George Castriot, surnamed Scanderbeg, whose name is so famous, but whose history is so imperfectly known. This young hero, son of the prince of Albania, the ancient Epirus, having been delivered by his father as an hostage to Amurath II. had been educated in the Ottoman court, instructed in the Mahomedan religion, and trained to the Turkish discipline. He had risen into

favour by his abilities and valour; but had constantly cherished the idea of liberating his country.* Being sent into Servia at the head of an army, he there heard of the death of his father; and being at the same time informed that a secretary of the Ottoman court was to pass near his camp, he caused him to be seized, and compelled him to put the sultan's signet to an order, enjoining the governor of Croya, the capital of Albania, to deliver up to him the town and citadel. This stratagem had the desired effect. The gates of Croya were opened to the imperial mandate. The Turkish garrison were massacred. Castriot dropped the mask of dissimulation, abjured the doctrines of the prophet, renounced his allegiance to the sultan, and proclaimed himself the avenger of his family and country. At the sound of religion and liberty, the Albanians, a martial race, crowded to his standard; and he made so good a use of the mountainous situation of the country, as to defy, during the long space of twenty-three years, all the efforts of the Ottoman power. The mighty Amurath, at the head of 60,000 horse, and 40,000 foot, a force which, under such a commander, might have seemed adequate to the conquest of an empire, entered Albania. The whole force of Scanderbeg did not amount to more than 15,000. With forces so inferior, he baffled all the efforts of his powerful antagonist, and Amurath retired with disgrace and loss from the siege of Croya, harrassed in his retreat by an enemy whom he had despised. In the plenitude of power, and amidst the

* Mr. Gibbon brands Castriot with dissimulation and impiety, in concealing so long his christianity under the profession of Mahomedanism. Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 12. p. 170. But Mr. Gibbon ought to have considered his critical situation.

glories

glories of conquest, the victorious arms of Mahomet II. were repeatedly baffled by the bold and successful rebel, or rather the illustrious patriot, who, till the last hour of his existence, exhibited himself the invincible champion of his country. After a life of danger and glory, the hero, who is worthy of being ranked with Pyrrhus, his countryman, saw his resources nearly exhausted, and died in extreme distress.* The immediate ruin of his country was the consequence of his death, and the incontestible proof of his military abilities. His infant son was saved from the national shipwreck. The Castriots were invested with a Neapolitan dukedom, and their blood continues to flow in some of the noble families of that realm.†

The most formidable opponent that Mahomet found in the career of his conquests, was John Huniades, the Hungarian general already mentioned. By his courage and conduct, the progress of the Ottoman arms was checked on the banks of the Danube. The last and most glorious action of his life, was his gallant defence of Belgrade against Mahomet II. who, during the space of forty days, besieged that city and fortress in person. The Turks had already entered the place, when they were compelled to retreat, and Belgrade succeeded Constantinople in being considered as the

* Mr. Gibbon, who seems to be no friend to the fame of Scanderbeg, says, that his narrow dominions and slender powers place him far behind the heroes of antiquity. But in the eyes of sound reason, his small resources shew the superiority of his abilities. Sir William Temple, on the contrary, ranks him amongst the greatest heroes, vol. 3. p. 385.

† Du Cange ap Gibbon, vol. 12. p. 175. It is said that the Turks having broken open his sepulchre, the janissaries wore his bones enchased in their bracelets as an amulet to inspire them with courage. A more honourable testimony of his martial talents could not be given, than that which this superstition of his enemies afforded. Gibbon's Dec- vol, 12. 174.

 bulwark

bulwark of Christendom. The knights of Rhodes, in their island, also opposed the Ottoman arms with success. But on the continent the sultan extended his conquests as far westward as Trieste; and by his capture of the town of Otranto, fixed the Mahomedan power in Italy. Rome and Venice were at once threatened with subjugation. The lofty genius and boundless ambition of Mahomet II. aspired to the conquest of Italy, as well as of Greece; and all Europe trembled at the progress of the Ottoman arms. At this critical moment, the death of the sultan, in his 51st year, an age at which he might have executed the greatest enterprizes, delivered Christendom from his sword. The character of this most famous of the Ottoman princes has been variously represented by historians. His learning has been frequently extolled, and probably exaggerated. He is said to have spoken or understood five languages, the Arabic, the Persian, the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Latin. Without giving implicit credit to the praises bestowed on his literature, we may indeed believe that he was well skilled in geography and history. His understanding was strong, and his genius was elevated. His attachment to the study of astrology, and his pretensions to skill in that fallacions science, which might seem to impeach the strength of his judgment, are sufficiently excused by the prevalent ideas of that age. His taste for the liberal arts, and the encouragement which he afforded to the painters of Italy, seem scarcely compatible with the character of the rigid Mussulman; but he always preserved at least an exterior regard for the doctrine of the koran.* Without giving credit to the tragical story of the beautiful

* Cantemir, p. 115.

Irene,

Irene, and other romantic tales, which fancy has feigned, and prejudice has perpetuated, it must, however, be confessed, that if he was enlightened, he was notwithstanding uncivilized, and the scholar was united with the barbarian in his character. As a politician and a warrior, his successes have acquired for him a reputation, which perhaps exceeds his merit. In all his successful enterprizes, his armies were superior, both in numbers and discipline, to those of his enemies; and he was constantly baffled by the inferior forces of Hunniades and Scanderbeg. The conquest of Constantinople has sealed his glory and immortalized his name; but if a warlike people had defended its walls, the city of the cæsars would have been the monument of his disgrace, rather than of his triumph.

The Ottoman arms were never more formidable to Europe than at the death of Mahomet II, A.D. 1481; but the empire was gradually extended, and during the whole space of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the preponderancy of the Turkish power gave just cause of apprehension to the Christian states. It would be useless to enter into details of the conquests of the Ottoman monarchs; it suffices to observe, that by long and bloody wars the Venetians lost all their possessions in the Morea and the isles of the Archipelago. Many of these conquests, indeed, were obtained at a vast expence of blood and treasure. Mahomet II. was succeeded by his son Bajazet II, who was frequently engaged in wars with Persia and Egypt, as well as with the Venetians and Hungarians. He was succeeded by his second son Selim, who annexed Syria and Egypt to his dominions.* Soly-

* See Historical Account of Egypt.

man

man II, surnamed the magnificent, is generally esteemed the greatest prince that ever sat on the Ottoman throne. He took the island of Rhodes, after a desperate resistance from the knights, and his whole reign of forty-five years, from 1520 to 1565, was almost a continual scene of hostilities with the Christian princes. He took Belgrade, and conquered all Hungary; and in 1528 he entered Austria, and besieged Vienna, but retired on the approach of Charles V. He was, however, generally successful both by sea and land; but the island of Malta triumphed over the Ottoman power. Mustapha, Solyman's general, after a siege of five months, and the loss of between 20,000 and 30,000 men, was obliged to abandon the enterprize. La Valette, the grand master, and the whole body of the knights, gained immortal honour on this occasion.* Solyman was succeeded in 1565 by his son Selim II. In his reign the Turkish marine received a fatal blow in the naval engagement of Lepanto. Selim having failed in an attempt on Persia, resolved to indemnify himself by the conquest of Cyprus, which then belonged to the Venetians. Nicosia, the capital, and Famagusta, were taken by storm after a desperate resistance, and the acquisition of this island is said to have cost the Turks not less than 100,000 men.

The fate of Cyprus alarmed the Christian powers, especially as the Turkish fleets now ravaged with impunity, not only the coasts of Dalmatia and Istria, but also those of Italy. A league was formed between the pope, the Venetians, and the Spaniards, and Don John of Austria was appointed to the chief command

* For the particulars of this memorable siege, see Thuanus, lib. 38, and Vertot Hist. des Chev. de Malt. tom. 4.

of

of the confederate fleet, which met with that of the Turks in the Gulph of Lepanto, near Corinth. In this place, near the promontory of Actium, famous for the victory obtained near 1,600 years before by Octavius over Mark Anthony, the greatest naval engagement was fought that is mentioned in the records of modern history. The force on both sides was nearly equal, and the combat was singularly obstinate and bloody. The gallies grappled together, the combatants fought hand to hand, neither a Spaniard, an Italian, nor a Turk, ever quitted his station, but all shewed the same contempt of danger and death. Hali, the Turkish admiral, surrounded with 400 of the boldest janissaries, and Don John of Austria, with a number of chosen warriors, in this manner maintained during the space of three hours the close and bloody conflict. At last the Ottoman admiral fell, his galley was taken, his head was instantly placed on the stern, and the banner of the cross was displayed from the main-mast. All was now a scene of confusion and carnage. The cry of victory resounded through the Christian fleet, and the enemy every where gave way. Thirty thousand Turks fell in this dreadful conflict, 10,000 were made prisoners, and 15,000 Christian slaves were liberated, a circumstance which presents to the eye of humanity a pleasing trait, in the disgusting picture of blood and carnage. Of the Turkish galleys 30 were sunk, 25 burnt, and 130 captured. Had the Christians been united in their councils, and prompt in pursuing their advantages, the Ottoman empire could never more have recovered its maritime strength.* But during the winter which the con-

* The memorable battle of Lepanto was fought on the 5th of October, 1571.

federates

federates spent in inaction, the Turks equipped another fleet, which again spread terror over the coasts of the Mediterranean. A peace, however, was soon after concluded, and Cyprus was formally ceded to the Ottoman Porte.

During the reign of Soliman the Magnificent, and the former part of that of his son Selim II, the Turkish empire was in the zenith of its greatness, and its armies flushed with repeated conquests, were formidable to all Europe. The succeeding reigns of Amurath III, Mahomet III, Achmet and Osman, which fill up the space from 1575 to 1623, furnish few events of importance in a general view of history. Mahomet III. is infamously distinguished for his cruelty, in causing his nineteen brothers to be strangled, and ten of his father's concubines, on account of their supposed pregnancy, to be thrown into the sea. Osman being put to death by the janissaries in 1623, was succeeded by Morad, or Amurath IV, in whose reign Bagdad was taken from the Persians. He was succeeded in 1640 by his brother Ibrahim, who reigned eight years, and was strangled by the janissaries. In the reign of his successor, Mustapha IV, Candia was taken from the Venetians after a siege of above twenty years, the longest recorded in history. The conquest of Candia cost the Turks 180,000 men; and the Venetians, with their allies, lost above 80,000 in its defence. It was in this reign, in the year 1683, that Vienna was unsuccessfully besieged by the Turks, who raised the siege at the approach of John Sobieski, king of Poland.* Mahomet IV. was shut up in prison by his subjects, and succeeded by his brother Soliman, during whose reign, and that of his brother and suc-

* See Historical View of Germany.

cessor, Achmet II, the Turks were generally unsuccessful in war. Mustapha II, who ascended the throne in 1694, was an active prince. He commanded his armies in person, but was totally defeated by the famous Prince Eugene of Savoy, at the battle of Zenta, in Hungary. This war between the Turks and the Imperialists, was terminated in 1699 by the peace of Carlovitz.* Mustapha was soon after deposed, and his brother Achmet III. ascended the throne. In his reign Charles XII. took refuge at Bender, and Peter the Great was surrounded on the banks of the Pruth.† The reign of Achmet was unfortunate. In Hungary, Prince Eugene repeatedly defeated the Turks with great slaughter, and compelled the Sultan to conclude the peace of Passarowitz.‡ An unsuccessful war with the Persians under Nadir Shah, succeeding this disadvantageous peace, the populace of Constantinople demanded the heads of the vizier, the chief admiral, and the secretary, which were accordingly struck off. But even this sacrifice was not sufficient to calm the enraged multitude. The sultan himself was deposed, and Mahomet V. was advanced to the throne. He was also unsuccessful in his wars against Nadir Shah, whom he was obliged to recognize as king of Persia. Mahomet V. died in 1754. He was succeeded by his brother Osman, who died in 1757. He was followed by Mustapha III, who reigned till 1774. Achmet IV, his brother, reigned till 1789, and at his death was succeeded by his nephew, Selim III, the son of Mustapha III, who was deposed in 1807 by the janissaries.

The events which have happened during the reigns

* See Historical View of Germany. † Ibid.

‡ See Historical View of Russia.

of these monarchs, have been related in treating of the affairs of Russia, Germany, &c. It is necessary to add, that the Porte, having in the last war been attacked by France, was vigorously supported by England. But notwithstanding the important services rendered by Great Britain in expelling the victorious enemy from the Ottoman territories, the divan of Constantinople has been drawn into the vortex of Parisian politics. In consequence of the ascendancy which France has acquired at the Porte, the Turks are involved in a war with England and Russia; and a British fleet has already appeared before Constantinople, although without the desired effect.

In taking a retrospective view of the Ottoman history, and contemplating the rise, progress, and decline, of a nation once so powerful and so formidable as to threaten all Europe with subjugation, but at present so weak and contemptible as to subsist only through the forbearance, or at least through the jealous politics and discordant interests of the Christian states, it is not difficult to discover the causes to which this vast empire owes its aggrandisement, and those which are operating its downfal. The Ottoman empire owed its rise to the anarchy which prevailed in Asia after the fall of the Seljukian dynasty, and its aggrandisement to the weakness of the Byzantine empire, to its own peculiar military constitution, and to the abilities of its princes. The unwarlike state of the degenerate and pusillanimous Greeks has been sufficiently described. The Ottoman constitution was, and to this day is peculiar.* The primitive subjects of Othman,

* The government of Egypt, under the Fatimite caliphs, bears the nearest resemblance. Their mamalukes were nearly the same as the Ottoman janissaries.

the

the founder of the empire, originally consisted of a few hundreds of wandering families, whom his ancestors had led from the eastern side of the Caspian Sea. These were soon lost in the mass of volunteers, or captives, who, under the general appellation of Turks, became united by the common ties of religion, language, manners, or interest. From the promiscuous assemblage a new people was formed; and by education and discipline a servile class was raised to conquer and command. The institution of the janissaries has already been noticed. These were the firm support of the Ottoman power; the invincible instruments of conquest. When the royal fifth of the captives was found insufficient to supply in each generation a succession of new soldiers, a tax of every fifth child was levied on the Christian subjects. At the age of twelve or fourteen, the most promising boys were torn from their parents: their names were enrolled, and from that moment they were maintained and educated for the public service. They were first instructed in the Turkish language. Their bodies were exercised by every labour that could fortify strength; and after having learned to leap, to run, to wrestle, to use the bow and the musket, they were drafted into the companies of the janissaries, and rigorously trained in the military discipline of that order: Those who shewed promising marks of genius were selected for the schools of law and theology, where they applied themselves to the study of the koran, and of the Arabic and Persian languages. According to seniority and merit, they were dismissed to civil, military, and ecclesiastical employments, and promoted by the choice of the sovereign, to the highest honours and emoluments of the

the empire.* Christian children were thus converted into Turkish soldiers and lawyers: an artificial nation of Turks was created: the ministers and generals were, in the strictest sense, the slaves of the sultan, to whom they were indebted for their support. Without parents, family, connections, or property, they were solely dependent on the hand that raised them from the dust. In the slow and painful steps of education, the character and talents of each were unfolded; and the man, naked and alone, unsupported by rank or influence, was reduced to the standard of his personal merit. Through all the degrees of this singular constitution; from the vizier to the lowest cadi; from the general to the private centinel, the strictest order, obedience, and discipline, was observable.

The janissaries being inured to obedience by severe discipline, and trained from childhood to military exercises, soon became the chief strength and pride of the Ottoman armies. Enthusiasm was employed to inspire them with courage. At their first institution, by Amurath I, they were solemnly recommended to the Divine protection by a famous Mahomedan saint, who delivered to them the consecrated banner; and every mark of distinction which the favour of the prince could confer, as well as every sentiment which religion could inspire, was employed in order to animate them with martial ardour, and with a consciousness of their own pre-eminence.† When such an institution is compared with the unwarlike troops of the declining empire of the Greeks, or the disorderly armies of the European states in that age, it is easy to

* This was also the case with the mamalukes of Egypt under the Fatimites.

† Cantemir's Hist. Ott. Emp. p. 38—87.

perceive,

perceive, that from the reign of Amurath I. to that of Solyman the Great, the Turkish troops possessed every advantage that can arise from superiority in military discipline.*

The most intelligent authors of the sixteenth century, acknowledge the superior attainments of the Turks in the military art, and the success of their arms justifies the observation.† But a military corps, constituted like the janissaries, can be useful only under an active and vigorous monarch, whose abilities command respect. Under such a prince they are obsequious instruments; they execute whatever he enjoins, and render his power irresistible. Under weak and indolent monarchs, they become turbulent and mutinous, and assume the tone of masters. The first period of the Ottoman history till the death of Solyman the Great, presents such a series of warlike princes, as the annals of no other nation can boast. Since his reign the Turkish sultans have, with a few exceptions, addicted themselves to a life of indolence and effeminacy in the bosom of the seraglio. In proportion to the inactivity and feebleness of the government, the discipline of the janissaries has become relaxed.‡ This military corps, once the firm support of the Ottoman throne, has become its terror, and like the prætorian guards of Rome has, in latter times, been more formidable to the sovereign and the people than to their external enemies. The other forces of the empire, con-

* For the superiority of the Turks over the Christians in military discipline and the art of war, during the reign of Solyman the Great, see Busbequius, p. 392, &c.

† Guicciardini says, that the Italians learned from the Turks the art of fortification, Hist. lib. 15, p. 266.

‡ Tournefort remarked, more than a century ago, this relaxation of military discipline, vol. 2, letter 6.

sisting of troops levied by the Timariots, which are lands held by military tenure, in imitation of the feudal system formerly established in Europe, are much worse disciplined than the janissaries, and equally refractory. But while the military discipline of the Turks has been long declining, that of the European states has been gradually rising to perfection. Russia, in particular, has acquired a fatal ascendency over the Porte. In the political, as well as in the natural balance, one side must necessarily be affected by the other, and the relative power of the Ottoman empire has, since the sixteenth century, suffered a still greater diminution from the advancement of the Christian states, than even from its internal decline.*

* Dr. Robertson thinks, that during the sixteenth century the Ottoman empire had attained to the highest degree of perfection of which its constitution was capable; and observes, that the great monarchies of Christendom "were still far from that state which could enable them to act with a full exertion of their force." Hist. Ch. V, vol. 1, p. 229.

CHAP. V.

Present State, political and moral — Religion — Government — Laws — Army—Navy—Revenues—Commerce— Manufactures—Population—Political importance—Language—Literature —Education — Manners and Customs—National character.

Religion.]—THE religion of the Turks is well known to be the Mahomedan ; but it is supposed, that in the European division of the empire, more than two-thirds of the people are Christians of the Greek communion. The mufti is the principal ecclesiastic of the Mahomedan religion. Next in rank are the moulahs, who, although considered as dignitaries of the church, perform no divine service, and are properly doctors of the law. From these the judges and cadilesquiers, or chief justices, are selected. The next class of the Mahomedan clergy are the imaums, who perform divine service in the mosques, and may be considered as the parish priests. But the moulahs are very different from the bishops among Christians. An essential difference between the Mahomedan and the Christian hierarchy arises from the circumstance of the koran and its commentaries being the only code of the civil law as well as the rule of religion. In Turkey, the terms of lawyer and theologian are synonymous. The cadis, who administer justice in the towns and villages, are considered as divines, who, like the moulahs, have directed their attention to the juridical part of the koran ; but the imaums alone can be truly regarded as

priests·

priests. The Greeks have their hierarchy of priests, bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs; but their church is in the last state of degradation. Its whole ecclesiastical system presents a scene of ambition, avarice, and intrigue, and its dignities are openly sold by the government. In Asiatic Turkey, besides the Mahomedans and Greeks, the Armenians are exceedingly numerous. In Armenia, and some other parts, they constitute the most numerous portion of the inhabitants. They embrace the doctrines of Eutychius, which admit of only one nature in Christ, a tenet that produces an irreconcileable enmity between them and the Greeks. Their hierarchy is similar to that of the Greek church. Both the Greeks and Armenians have numerous monasteries. Some of the Armenians are in communion with the church of Rome.* All the Christians of Turkey are in a degraded state. Both clergy and laity are extremely ignorant. In general they are strict observers of the fasts, festivals, and other exterior ordinances of religion, but have little regard to moral duties. The Maronites are Christians in communion with the see of Rome, but differ in a variety of minute particulars from the observances of the Roman church. The Circassians, &c. are generally Mahomedans; but they attend very little either to the theory or practice of religion. In Asiatic Turkey are also several Mahomedan sects, who have their peculiar tenets. Among these, the Druses have particularly attracted the attention of travellers.† This singular people affect the exterior appearance of Mahomedans, while they

* For a particular account of the Armenian religion, see Tournefort, vol. 3, letter 8.

† For a long dissertation on the Druses, See L'Abbe Mariti, trav. 2, p. 24, &c.

reject almost all the doctrines of the koran. There are also Roman Catholics in most of the Turkish cities; and Jews are numerous. In Turkey all religions meet with toleration for money.

Government.]—The Ottoman government is despotic. The supreme power is vested in the sultan, who, from his high elevation, sees all his subjects reduced to the same level. Employment in his service is the only circumstance that confers distinction; and the moment that a minister or general is no longer in office, he and his family sink into their original obscurity. In Turkey, the only relation between the sovereign and the subject is that of master and slave. As despotism, however, must stand on the basis of opinion or force, the arbitrary will of the sultan has two powerful checks: in religion, the principle on which his authority is founded, and in the army, the instrument by which he must maintain his power. On these considerations a late traveller has pronounced the Ottoman government to be less despotic than several Christian sovereignties * The sultan is indeed obliged to govern according to the laws of the koran; and the mufti and the moulahs are its interpreters. But as all the great officers of the law, with the mufti himself, who is the head of the order, are appointed by the sultan, and removeable at his pleasure, it is easy to perceive that this body possesses little constitutional authority that can operate as a restraint on the will of the sovereign.† The army appears to be the only power that can effectually check the despotism of government. The janissaries are at once the support and the terror of the throne. As they are masters of

* Porter's Observations, p. 76.

† Tournefort, vol. 3, letter 7, p. 334.

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the capital, and of the person and power of the sovereign, they depose and exalt sultans at their pleasure. All the revolutions that have happened at the Porte, have been brought about by their agency, or at least by their approbation, without which nothing could be effected. The acts of the janissaries of Constantinople indeed are always confirmed by the ulema, or body of the law, as those of the Prætorian guards at Rome were by the senate. But in every revolution effected by military power, it is usual to confirm the acts of the soldiery by the civil or religious formalities, peculiar to the constitution of the country in which such transactions take place. Without this, civil government could not retain even any ostensible form or authority. It must also be observed, that although despotism retains its full vigour in the empire, it is greatly weakened in the person of the sultan, whose authority in many of the provinces is extinguished, by the revolt of the pashas, who have usurped the sovereignty.

Laws.]—The Turkish laws are contained in the Koran, and in the comments of the most approved and learned doctors on that sacred book. These laws appear sufficiently equitable; but are extremely perverted by the avarice of the pashas and judges, and the system of oppression and corruption which pervades every department of the administration. Bribery is universally practised; and although some rare instances of justice are related, all travellers agree in their accounts of the general venality of the Turkish judges.

Army.]—The decline of military discipline in the Turkish armies, has been already noticed. The enfeebled state of the government has also caused a great

diminution in their numbers. At present, the whole effective force of the Ottoman empire cannot be estimated at above 150,000 men, ill-disciplined and dispirited by successive disasters in the late contests with Russia. The want of discipline in the Turkish armies renders them, in time of war, not less destructive to the provinces of their own empire, through which they march, than to those of the enemy.

Navy].—The Turkish navy consists at present of about thirty ships of the line, with a proportionable number of gallies, &c. A late statistical writer says, that on any great emergency, the Turkish navy can be increased to forty sail of the line, with gallies, galliots, &c. amounting to the number of 200 ships of war, carrying 50,000 men. The states of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, are obliged to furnish ten sail of the line.*

Revenues.]—The revenues of the Ottoman empire are computed at about 7,000,000*l.* sterling, arising from the land-tax, the customs, and the capitation tax on unbelievers; but it is impossible to say how far it might be augmented by arbitrary exactions.

Commerce.]—The commerce of Turkey is chiefly in the hands of foreigners, Franks, Armenians, and Jews. The principal ports are Constantinople and Smyrna, with Bussora on the Persian Gulph. The chief exports are currants, figs, silk, cotton, carpets, coffee, and drugs. The imports are cloth, and various articles of European manufacture. The Turkey trade was formerly of great consequence to Great Britain; and the merchants who carried it on were once the most opulent trading company in London.† Since

* Zimmerman, p. 355.

† Porter's Observations, p. 360, &c.

the middle of the last century, the French have had the principal share in this commerce. It is carried on chiefly from the port of Marseilles, which owes to the Turkey trade the greatest part of its opulence.*

Manufactures.]—The manufactures of Turkey have been mentioned in describing the principal cities: a repetition would therefore be useless. It will, however, be recollected, that the carpets so highly valued in Europe, are the chief manufactures for exportation.

Population.]—The population of the Turkish dominions must be considered as a subject of which only very inaccurate information can be obtained. It appears, however, to be very inconsiderable in proportion to the extent of territory, and the excellence of the soil and climate. The extent of Asiatic Turkey is generally estimated at about 470,000 square miles, and the population at only 10,000,000. And a late statistical writer computes the extent of European Turkey at 182,562 square miles, and allows only 7,000,000 for the population.† From this it appears, that the Ottoman empire in Europe and Asia does not contain above 17,000,000 of inhabitants, a very small population in comparison of its natural advantages. The defect of population in almost all parts of Turkey, is a circumstance that forcibly strikes the eye and the mind of every traveller.

Political relations and importance.]—The political weight of the Ottoman empire was, about two centuries and a half ago, the principal object of attention in the system of European politics: but it has long since lost this alarming preponderancy. The political

* The Turkey trade from Marseilles was greatly promoted by the famous Colbert, minister of Louis XIV. And. Hist. Com. vol. 2. p. 499.

† Zimmermann, tab. 1.

importance

importance of this declining empire is at present to be estimated not so much by what it is able to effect, as by the advantages which the neighbouring powers might derive from its dismemberment. It is to this view of things that it owes the continuation of its existence. Had not the interference of Great Britain and Prussia prevented such a revolution, it is extremely probable that the Russian eagle might before this day have taken the place of the crescent on the towers of Constantinople. Notwithstanding the harmony which at present subsists between France and the Porte, the French power in Italy has no favourable appearance to Turkey. In the fluctuations of political affairs, remote conjecture must always be vague. But it is not improbable that the Turks will, at no very distant period, be driven beyond the Bosphorus. The declining empire of the Ottomans has three great powers ranged along its almost defenceless frontiers, the Russians, the Austrians, and the French in Italy. On their division or union its fate depends. Its dissolution or dismemberment, whenever either shall happen, will most probably excite a general commotion in Europe. Such a revolution will constitute a new æra in the history of human affairs, and furnish a fund of speculation to the politician and the moral philosopher.

Language.]—Turkey, comprising several different nations, has also a variety of languages. Of these, the chief are the Turkish, the modern Greek and Syriac, and the Armenian. The Turkish language is a mixture of various dialects, and far inferior in purity, force, and elegance, to the Persian and the Arabic. The modern Greek is the most prevalent language in Greece, and the islands of the Archipelago. It is

 also

also spoken in several of the other parts of Turkey; but it is very different from the ancient classical language. The modern Syriac is also a corrupt language, spoken chiefly in Syria. The Armenians have a vulgar and a learned language: the latter exists only in their best manuscripts, and to understand it is reckoned a great accomplishment. It is said to be very expressive, and enriched with scientific terms, from which it appears that literature has once flourished in Armenia much more than at present.*

Literature.]—Literature is at a low ebb among the Turks; but it is not wholly neglected. The market for books in Constantinople is extensive, containing many shops well supplied with manuscripts in the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian languages. The introduction of printing has been repeatedly attempted; but the design has hitherto failed through the representations of the numerous copyists, whom it would have deprived of employment and subsistence. It is now, however, likely to succeed. There are several public libraries in Constantinople, among which are those of St. Sophia, and the Solymanic jamasy; but the most elegant is that which was founded by the Grand Vizier Raghid. The edifice, which is in the midst of a square court, is wholly of marble. The books are chiefly theological. In the vicinity is a school founded by the same vizier,† The Turkish poets and historians are greatly inferior to those of Persia and Arabia.

Education.]—The ignorance of the Turks is so well known, that the system of education may be reason-

* Tournefort, vol. 3. letter 8. p. 243,

† Browne's Trav. p. 531. The late sultan restored the printing-press. Browne's Trav. p. 506.

ably

ably be supposed to be defective. In Constantinople, and other cities, there are several schools, but scarcely any that can deserve the name of a college or university. Theology, which, as already observed, includes the civil law, is almost the only science that is studied; and the knowledge of the Arabic and Persian languages is among the Turks the ne plus ultra of a learned education.

Persons, manners, and customs.]—The different nations and tribes inhabiting Turkey in Europe and Asia, exhibit a variety of customs, manners, &c. Those of the Turks, a ruling people, are, by the influence of their religion, impressed with a general character of uniformity throughout the empire. Their adherence to ancient prejudices and usages, and their aversion to novelty, perpetuate their customs, their manners, and social habits, all of which are extremely different from those of the Europeans. Volumes have been employed in describing the general state of Turkish society, and the theme is now become trite and familiar. A slight glance at some of the most striking particulars is all that can here be admitted, and all indeed that is necessary. In their persons the Turks are in general of a good stature, of an athletic form, and robust constitution. Their dress is the turban, or red bonnet, wrapped round with numerous folds of white muslin or calico, the border differing in magnitude and fashion, according to the quality of the wearer. The emirs, &c. descendants of Mahomet, are distinguished by a turban entirely green. The shirts worn by the Turks are of calico, with long sleeves, over which they were a cossac, or long robe of fustian, satin, and often of gold tissue. The cossac is fastened with a girdle, of which the two ends,

elegantly

elegantly tasselled, hang down before. In this girdle is stuck a dagger, the handle of which is ornamented with gold, silver, &c. The pocket-pook, tobacco-box, &c. are carried in the bosom. The vest, or long robe, is worn over the cossac, and comes down to the heels. It is commonly of the finest French, or English broad cloth, scarlet, brown, or olive green, and trimmed with the most costly furs.* The breeches, or pantaloons, descend to the heels. The shoes, or rather slippers, are mostly of yellow leather. The Christians and Jews are not permitted to wear the turban or the yellow slippers. Instead of the turban, they wear a cap, and their shoes are mostly red, violet-coloured, or black. The dress of the females differs little from that of the men, the chief distinction being in the head dress, that of the fair sex consisting of a bonnet of pasteboard, covered with cloth of gold, or other materials, suited to the opulence of the wearer, with a veil reaching down to the eye-brows, while a handkerchief conceals the lower part of the face. The furniture of the houses is mean, the carpet and a low sofa being generally the principal articles. The Turks have little inclination to active diversions: to enjoy the shade, to recline on a sofa, to smoke tobacco, and to intoxicate themselves with opium, are their principal amusements. Games of hazard are prohibited by the koran, but they frequently play at chess. The coffee-houses and the baths furnish other sources of amusement; and the bairam, or carnival, which follows their long Lent, is a season of general dissipation. The Mahomedan religion, by its peculiar ordinances, its regular hours of prayer, and its frequent ablutions,

* Constantinople and Pekin are the chief markets for the furs of Russia. See Coxe.

gives

gives a particular tincture to the social habits and manners of its professors. To its frequent ablutions may be attributed the personal cleanliness which in both sexes is so remarkable; and to the indispensable obligations of prayer five times every day, with the conscious pride of regarding themselves as the peculiar favorites of heaven, may probably be ascribed the gravity of their deportment. The Greeks are as different in their customs and manners, as in their religion. Their diversions are far too numerous to be particularized, but are described at large in books of travels. The Armenians are a polite and sensible people; in amiableness of manners, and in purity of morals, they excel all the other subjects of the Turkish empire.* Their patience and perseverance is astonishing; and in their long journies they are indefatigable, regarding no weather, even in the most rigorous seasons.† The Armenians may indeed be considered as a phænomenon in the history of commerce. The greatest part of the trade of the Levant, and of the whole interior of Asia, is in their hands.‡ Both by sea and land they carry on an extensive traffic, and they travel for commercial purposes into the most distant regions.

In the northern extremities of Asiatic Turkey, among the mountains of Caucasus, between the Euxine and the Caspian Seas, are various tribes, having peculiar manners and customs, and different languages.§ Of these tribes, or nations, the Abascians

* Tournefort, vol. 3. lett. 8. † Id. ibid.

‡ Jackson's Comm. of Mediterran. p. 26. This author, however, does not give to their integrity and morals such unqualified praise as Tournefort and some others.

§ Ellis's Memoirs, p. 14.

and

and the Circassians are the most numerous and important. They are situated on the Turkish and Russian frontier, and part of them are considered as subject to one, and part of them to the other, of those two great empires, although they pay little obedience to either. The Abascians have a peculiar cast of feature, a small face, a compressed head, and projecting nose, being the general characteristics of their race.* They have in all ages been addicted to robbery, and their depredations are exceedingly harrassing to the Turks.† These people appear to have been more numerous than at present, and to have possessed more extensive territories, till the Circassians drove them into the defiles of the mountains, and by repeated massacres diminished their population. The Circassians are a bold and warlike race. Their political system is strictly feudal. Their princes and usdens, or nobles, may be considered as constituting the nation, and their subjects as slaves whom they have conquered.‡ With the form they have all the spirit of the feudal system in the most barbarous ages of Europe. Private wars are common, and family quarrels are perpetuated. A prince, or usden, never receives any compensation for the death of a relative or friend, but blood for blood is always required, and until this be obtained, the spirit of revenge is transmitted to all succeeding generations.§ As the Circassians have been so generally celebrated for their personal beauty, the following extract from Pallas will not be unacceptable. " The Circassians are a handsome race of people; the men, particularly among the higher classes, are generally tall, of a thin form, but Herculean structure;

* Pallas latter Trav. vol. 2, ch. 13, p 172.

† Ibid. vol. 2; ch. 13, p. 169. ‡ Ibid. p. 174. § Ibid. p. 193.

they

they are very slight about the loins, have a small foot, and are uncommonly strong in the arms. In general they have a truly Roman and martial appearance, yet there are some marks from which it is evident that they are descended from Nogay mothers. Although their females are not all Circassian beauties, yet they are generally well shaped, have a fair complexion, dark brown, or black hair, and are justly proportioned. I have, however, met with a greater number of beauties among the Circassian women, than in any other unpolished race.*" The dress of the men resembles that of the Tartars, but is more elegant. An embroidered cap shaped like a melon, and decorated with gold and silver lace, adorns the head, which is always shaved, but the whiskers are permitted to grow. The under garment is made of a light stuff, above which persons of rank wear a short and richly ornamented waistcoat. The upper dress is of strong cloth, somewhat shorter than the under garment, with open sleeves, and often trimmed with furs. This upper covering is always provided with an embroidered pocket on each side of the breast, in which they carry their cartridges. When a prince or usden pays a visit in form, he dresses himself in all his accoutrements, with a coat of mail made of polished steel rings, a helmet and arm plates also of polished steel. The dagger and pistols are hung at the girdle, and the bow and quiver are fastened with straps round the hips. A Circassian of rank never leaves the house without his sabre, nor ventures beyond the precincts of his village without being dressed in complete armour, with his breast pockets filled with ball cartridges. The princes and usdens, or nobles, employ

* Pallas latter Trav. vol. 3, ch. 13, p. 183.

themselves

themselves in war, pillage, and hunting; they live a luxurious life, stroll about and meet in convivial parties. The nobles pay no taxes to the princes, but are obliged to serve personally in their wars: the vassals, or slaves, are hereditary property, and are employed in cultivating the lands, breeding cattle, &c. The princes commit the education of their children to the usdens; the sons are trained in all the discipline necessary to constitute a successful robber. The Circassian girls are from their infancy fed in the most sparing manner, in order that they may acquire a slender and delicate shape. They are instructed in every kind of ornamental work belonging to the domestic œconomy of females, such as embroidery, weaving of fringe, &c. The dress of the Circassian women, is not materially different from that of the men; they wear the same kind of cap, under which the hair is turned up, and till their marriage their waists are compressed with a tight kind of stays. Their priests suffer the whole beard to grow, and wear a red turban. The Circassians are very cleanly in their persons and food. Not more than sixty years ago they professed Christianity, at present they are nominal Mahomedans, but seem totally ignorant of religion.* Their agriculture barely suffices for home consumption; their articles of trade are horses, sheep, and the slaves which they take in their prædatory excursions. They are excellent horsemen, and have several fine breeds of horses, in the treatment of which they are not less careful than the Arabs. They study to breed not only beautiful, but at the same time strong and useful animals, that are able to support fatigue, while they excel in swiftness; for in their

* Pallas latter Trav. vol. 3, ch. 13, p. 179.

prædatory

prædatory expeditions, their success, and even their safety depends on the quality of their horses. Almost every family of rank, whether princes or usdens, has a particular breed, known by distinct marks. These they take every measure to preserve and improve, and if any one should imprint on a horse of the common race, a mark denoting noble descent, he would forfeit his life for the forgery.* Although they are considered as subjeet partly to Turkey and partly to Russia, their subjection appears to be merely nominal. Imaretta and Mingrelia are nearly in the same state. The people are mostly Christians; the feudal system is the same as among the Circassians, and these provinces may be regarded as little more than nominally subject to Turkey. It will be recollected that Circassia, Imaretta, Mingrelia, and Georgia, which is now a Persian province, are the countries which originally furnished the Mamaluks of Egypt, and which, during the space of some centuries, have peopled the Turkish seraglios with beauties. The Kurds, and Turkomans, are pastoral and wandering tribes. The former range over the country from the sources of the Euphrates, as far as Mosul. The latter frequent the interior of Asia Minor. The Turcomans appear in the vicinity of Tocat, which seems to be the utmost extent of their range to the eastward. The property of these rambling hordes consists chiefly of sheep, with some goats, buffaloes, and camels, and their mode of life resembles that of the wandering Arabs and Tartars. The Turcomans seem to be an original Turkish tribe, and they speak the Turkish language.† The Arabs range over the greatest part

* Pallas latter Trav. vol. 3, ch. 13, p. 203.

† Volney, vol. 1, p. 369.

of Syria, and the countries on the Euphrates and the Tygris. Indeed one of the most singular and striking features of the state of society in Turkey, especially the Asiatic part of the empire, is, that one part of the people is civilized, while the other part consists of pastoral wanderers and lawless depredators. On the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris, from Bussora to Bagdad, the grand seignior possesses not even a shadow of authority, except in the towns that are garrisoned with Turkish soldiers; and not only those countries, but even all Palestine, may be considered as in the power of the Arabs.* In most part of Asiatic Turkey, the government is so weak and inefficient, that bands of robbers infest the country to the very walls of the cities; and to travel from one large town to another, it is necessary that the caravans should be well armed and guarded. When Mr. Jackson was at Mosul, the country was in such a state that it was considered as extremely dangerous to venture only a few miles from the city, and numerous gangs of banditti infested the road to Diarbekar.† The case is the same throughout Asia Minor, and all travellers agree in representing the dangers of travelling in Asiatic Turkey.

National Character.]—The general character of the different nations of Europe, admits only of a few distinctions, and those not very strongly marked. But in extending our view towards the other quarters of the globe, we find a more striking difference. The Turks, although settled in Europe, are Asiatic people; and their customs and manners are rather Asiatic than European. Prejudice, ignorance, and want of

* Browne's Travels, p. 417.

† Journey from India, p. 35, 134, 158.

curiosity,

curiosity, gravity of deportment, and contempt of foreigners, are conspicuous traits in their national character. These have been generally, perhaps erroneously, attributed to the influence of Mahomedanism. The religion of the koran is not more intollerant in its nature, than most of the Christian sects have shewed themselves in practice, nor have the Mahomedans ever treated the Christians so ill, as the Christians have sometimes treated one another. Among the bright parts of the Turkish character, must be ranked their extensive charities, in which they are not surpassed by any people of whatever nation or religion. The numerous caravanseras for the accommodation of travellers, the provision of water, &c. for their comfort on the road, their hospitals, &c. all shew a benevolent attention to the wants of their fellow creatures. Their charity is even extended to the brute creation, and testamentary donations are often made for the relief of the dogs that ramble about the streets.* The defects which appear in the national character, ought rather to be attributed to the baleful influence of a government ill-planned and worse administered, than to the doctrines of the koran, which did not prevent science and letters from flourishing among the Arabians under their caliphs. These Arabians professed Mahomedanism, with at least as much zeal as the Turks, but exhibited a total difference of national character.

* Tournefort, vol. 2, letter 7, p. 304—309.

ASIA.

ASIA may be considered as extending from about the equator to 78° north latitude, and from about 26° to 170° east longitude. Its extreme limits, towards the north, however, can only be imperfectly known, being terminated by the Arctic Ocean, of which the shores, by reason of the ice on one side and impassable morasses on the other, are in many places almost inaccessible to navigators and travellers, nor are those on the east ascertained with precision. From its situation, it is evident that Asia possesses all the varieties of climate, from the scorching heats of the torrid to the rigours of the frozen zone. This quarter of the globe is of great importance, both in geography and history. The variety of its climates and productions, render it interesting to the naturalist; while the great events to which it has given birth, and the extraordinary revolutions of which it has been the theatre, give it no less importance in the eye of the historian and the moral philosopher.

The chief geographical features of Asia, will be noticed in describing its different regions. Here it suffices to observe, that it is characterised by some of the highest mountains and largest rivers on the old continent. The principal ranges of mountains, are the celebrated Taurus of Asia Minor, which was supposed by the ancients to extend as far as the Imaus; the

the rugged Caucasus, which occupies the space between the Caspian and Euxine seas; the Belur Tag, which extending from south to north, separates little Bucharia from independent Tartary; and the Himmala, which stretching along the southern parts of Thibet, is generally considered as a boundary between that country and Hindostan. The Belur Tag and the Himmala, are supposed to be two branches of the Imaus of Ptolemy. None of the Asiatic mountains are yet ascertained to be of an elevation equal to that of Mont Blanc, which is generally supposed to be the highest point of land on this continent. But our imperfect knowledge of the geography of the interior of Asia, renders it impossible to determine this matter; and it is not improbable that some of the mountains of the Belur Tag, or the Himmala chain, may equal the highest of the European Alps. Mr. Pallas thinks that the summit of the Elburus, in the Caucasian chain, may rival Mont Blanc in altitude. The principal rivers are the Hoang-ho or Yellow river, and the Kiang-ku or Blue river of China, the Oby, the Yrnessee, the Lena in Asiatic Russia, the Ganges, the Burrampooter, the Indus, the celebrated Euphrates, and the Tigris, which will all be noticed in their proper places. The Volga is as much an European as an Asiatic river. Those extensive and elevated tracts called steps, and especially the high table land which forms the central part of Asia, are features peculiar to that continent. The great geographical defect of Asia, is the want of inland seas, which might afford an easy communication between different parts of the interior. The Caspian is a large body of water, but having no communication with any other sea, the means of intercourse which it

affords are, in a great measure, limited to Russia and Persia. This want of communication by water, has rendered it necessary to carry on the internal commerce of Asia chiefly by caravans, which has been the practice of all ages. This mode of travelling in caravans for the purposes of commerce, is almost peculiar to Asia and Africa; but it is more general, and attended with greater difficulties in the latter, than the former quarter of the globe.

The geography of the eastern countries of Asia, was almost totally unknown to the ancients. The country of the Seres, supposed to be little Buckaria, and the Golden Chersonesus, comprehending the southern parts of the Birman dominions, appear to have been the boundaries of their geographical knowledge; and the existence of the great empire of China, appears to have been unknown to Pliny and Ptolemy. That adventurous traveller, Marco Polo, was the first who gave to Europe some information concerning the extreme parts of Asia, and the knowledge which he introduced, has been illustrated by the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, and the subsequent voyages of merchants and missionaries.

To the eye of the historian and the moral philosopher, this vast continent is extremely interesting. Asia, the cradle of the human race, the scene of our most early histories, and the seat of the first monarchies established in the world, has been the theatre of the most tremendous revolutions. "Our European battles," says a late writer, "are only petty skirmishes in comparison of the numbers that have fought and fallen in the plains of Asia."* But what renders this quarter of the globe peculiarly interesting, is the con-

* Voltaire Ess. sur l'Hist. gen. tom. 3, ch. 60, p. 8.

consideration,

sideration, that in Asia was laid the scene of the great mystery of human redemption. If to this circumstance we add, that not only Paganism, but Judaism and Mahomedanism, originated in this quarter of the globe, it will be readily perceived that the whole world has derived its religion from Asia.

ASIATIC TURKEY.

CHAP. I.

Situation—Extent—Boundaries—Face of the Country—Mountains—Rivers—Lakes—Mineralogy—Mineral Waters—Soil—Climate—Vegetable Productions—Zoology—Natural Curiosities—Antiquities and Artificial Curiosities.

THE Asiatic part of the Turkish empire extends from the Archipelago, or Egean sea, to the confines of Persia, a space of somewhat more than 1000 miles from west to east. Its extent from north to south is scarcely less than 1,100 miles. The eastern boundaries next to Persia, are chiefly ideal lines; those towards Arabia, on the south, are still more obscure and uncertain; but on the west the Levant and Egean, with the Hellespont, the Propontis, and the Bosphorus; and on the north the Black Sea and the river of Cuban, which separates the Turkish from the Russian territories, form positive, real, and determinate limits. This extensive territory, comprises the countries so well known in history by the names of Asia Minor, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Syria. Some few of these have acquired new appellations, and it cannot be expected that ancient and modern boundaries should exactly coincide. Asia Minor has, from its provincial divisions, acquired new appellations; but among the European writers it retains for the

most part its ancient name. The same may be said of Armenia, although it be sometimes styled Turcomania. Syria has retained its classical appellation. Mesopotamia is now the province of Algeziras; but the modern nearly correspond with the ancient boundaries. Curdistan and Irak Arabi indicate with less precision the celebrated country of Chaldea.

Face of the country.]—No country in the world is more beautifully diversified with mountains, valleys, and fertile plains. Asiatic Turkey having but few rivers, fewer indeed than any tract in Europe of equal extent; and, except Irak Arabi, the ancient Chaldea, with some parts of Mesopotamia, possessing in general a rocky soil, and enjoying the advantage of having been cultivated from the earliest antiquity, presents none of those swampy levels which form so distinguishing a characteristic of most of the American, and some European countries. Chaldea, the supposed seat of Paradise, and of undisputed celebrity for the luxuriancy of its vegetation, is a level plain watered by the various branches of the Tigris and the Euphrates, but through the neglect of cultivation, is now become little better than a swampy morass.

Mountains.]—The mountains of Asiatic Turkey are numerous, some of them are of a great elevation, and many of them of well known classical fame. The celebrated chain of Mount Taurus, justly claims the pre-eminence. This lofty range was once considered as extending from the shores of the Archipelago to the sources of the Ganges; but the researches of modern geography limit its extent to about 600 miles, and fix its termination at the Euphrates.* Another

* The mountains of Taurus abound with Cedars of a great size. The ascent and descent occupied three days. Brown's Trav. p. 492.

extensive

extensive chain pervades the country from Armenia almost to the bay of Scandaroon. This seems to have been the Anti Taurus of antiquity; but in various parts of its range, it was known by different names. Asia Minor, indeed, is intersected with numerous broken chains, running in almost every direction. The towering heights of Caucasus, are for the most part comprised within the Turkish empire, if its declining power can properly be said to extend over these mountainous regions, of which the bold and ferocious inhabitants barely acknowledge a nominal allegiance. The northern ridge of Caucasus, constituting part of the boundary between Russia and Turkey, has been already noticed in describing the latter empire, as this truly alpine range, of which the middle summits are covered with eternal ice and snow, has been explored only on the Russian side, and is classed by Guldenstadt, Pallas, and Tooke, among the Russian mountains.* Concerning the other Caucasian ridges, intelligence is obscure and dubious. The western parts of Asia Minor present many mountains of classical celebrity, particularly Olympus and Ida, extending in ranges from north to south. Olympus, now called Keshik Dag, is a lofty ridge covered with perpetual snow. Tournefort considers it as one of the highest mountains in Asia.† Mount Ida, about 140 miles to the west of Olympus, is of inferior, though very considerable elevation; but it derives its principal celebrity from its prox-

* Tooke's View of Russ. vol. 1. p. 107, &c. Pallas latter Trav. vol. 2, ch. 11.

† Tournefort's Trav. vol. 3, p. 310. This traveller set out on the 21st November to explore Mount Olympus. He found the ascent tolerably easy, but after three hours riding, he met with nothing but fir trees and snow.

imity

imity to ancient Troy, being consecrated to perpetual veneration by Homer's immortal verse. From the summit of Ida, called by the ancients Garganus, several prominences extend westward to the Hellespont, from which its distance does not exceed thirty miles. Amidst these lower ridges stood the celebrated city of Troy, the devoted object of Grecian vengeance. In modern times the reality of the Trojan war, if not the very existence of Troy, has been called in question, in order to support a studied hypothesis.* Homer's immortal work, however, has been ably vindicated by M. Morrit; and a late eminent traveller observes, that whether the Illiad be founded on fact, or have no other basis than fiction, the indelible features of nature yet mark the accuracy of the poet's topography. Every one who visits the Troade, with the Illiad in his hand, and examines the supposed site of Troy, on the elevated point between the Simois and the Scamander, will feel his mind impressed with all the ideas that can possibly arise from the recollection of celebrated scenes, combined with a view of the theatre on which they took place.† The most celebrated mountain of Syria is that of Libanus, or Lebanon, in the times of antiquity famed for its cedars. The ridge of Libanus runs in a direction from north to south, at the distance of about thirty or forty miles from the shores of the Mediterranean. The summits are of considerable height, and often covered with snow. The Anti Libanus is a short detached chain on the east, running in nearly a parallel line. Mount Tabor, famed as the scene of Christ's transfiguration, and a place of pious pilgrimage for the Oriental Christians,

* Bryant's Ancient Mythology.

† Morrit's Vindication of Homer. Olivier's Trav. p. 124.

is

is of a somewhat singular appearance, being of a conical form, and covered with small trees from the bottom to the top. The summit is a plain of about two miles in circumference, which being formerly surrounded with walls, rendered this mountain a fortress of great strength. Mount Tabor, rising amidst the plains of Galilee, commands a charming variety of prospects. The eye wanders with delight over the beautiful and fertile fields of Nain and Nazareth, and the valley of Megiddo, where Josiah, king of Judah, fell in battle against Pharaoh Necho, while the more distant view comprises the mountains of Hermon and Gilboa, famous in scripture; as also those of Samaria, and Arabia Petræa, with part of the Mediterranean Sea, which bounds the western horizon.* Other mountains of less magnitude and fame, both in Asia Minor and Syria, are too numerous for any particular description. Most of the mountains of Asiatic Turkey are covered with immense forests of oaks, elms, beeches, pines, cedars, and other trees.

Rivers.]—The largest as well as the most celebrated river of Asiatic Turkey, is the Euphrates. This river, so frequently mentioned both in sacred and profane history, rises in the mountains of Armenia, a few miles to the north-east of Erzerum.† In its course it is joined by the Morad from the east, which being the principal stream, its source in Mount Ararat, might justly be considered as that of the Euphrates. After pursuing a south-west direction to Semisat, the ancient Samosata, this celebrated river being checked in its progress by a chain of mountains, turns to the

* For a circumstantial account of Mount Tabor, with its former fortifications and edifices, see Mariti's Trav. vol. 2, p. 180, &c.

† Tournefort, vol. 3, p. 162—208.

south, and afterwards runs an extensive course to the south-east, till it meets with the Tigris at Cornou, where the united stream takes the modern appellation of Schat El-Arab; and after a course of about 200 miles falls into the Persian Gulph. A late traveller says, that the Euphrates, in some places at a considerable distance above its junction with the Tigris, is so broad as to be seen over with difficulty, but in many places so shallow, that the reeds appear above the surface of the water. He describes the navigation as very difficult, and the adjacent country as very low and exposed to great inundations from the breaking of the banks, which, with the excessive heat of the sun and the immense number of fish and animalcula that perish and putrify when the water dries up, render the air extremely insalubrious.* The same author complains exceedingly of the great heat of the climate of ancient Chaldea, and of the numbers of musquetos, which, with the horrible roaring of wild beasts, almost preclude the possibility of taking any repose.† He represents the present state of this once flourishing and fertile region, as now deplorably miserable, being overrun with jackals, wolves, lions, &c. and with Arabian robbers still more ferocious. He does not appear to have observed any forests, but numerous jungles of willows and brushwood, with thickets of date and fig-trees. Among all the disagreeable circumstances attending the present state of this celebrated region he remarks this singular advantage, that the water of the Euphrates is, beyond comparison, the most salubrious and pleasant that he had ever tasted, and that so long as it could be procured he never de-

* Jakson's Journey from India, p. 44, 46, 57. † Ibid. p. 45—48.

sired

sired any other beverage.* The whole course of this river may be computed at about 1,400 miles.

The next river of importance in Asiatic Turkey is the Tigris, which is supposed to derive its name from the rapidity of its current.† A late traveller, however, describes it as a slow and sluggish stream. Mr. Jackson represents it as much more rapid than the Euphrates, "particularly," says he, "at this season, the beginning of July, when the freshes are coming down from the snowy mountains." Perhaps the difference of the seasons in which those two modern travellers navigated the Tigris, may have occasioned the difference in their representations of this celebrated river. The Tigris rises on the north of Medan, about 150 miles south from the source of the Euphrates, and pursues a southerly direction, but with many zigzag windings, to Cornou, the place of their junction, which is about 800 miles from its source, and about 90 miles above Bussora.‡

The third river of Asiatic Turkey is the celebrated Halys of antiquity, called by the Turks Kizil Irmak, which rises in Mount Taurus, and after crossing a great part of Asia Minor falls into the Euxine on the west of the Gulph of Sansoun. There are many other rivers in Asia Minor; but none of them are very considerable, though many of them be celebrated in classical history or poetry. The chief river of Syria is the Orontes, which rises about eighty miles to the north of Damascus, and runs almost due north till it takes a

* Jackson's Journey, p. 57.

† "A celeritate Tigris incipit vocari: ita appellant Medi sagittam." The Tigris first derived its name from its swiftness: this name the Medes give to an arrow, Pliny's Hist. Nat. lib. 6, cap. 31.

‡ Jackson speaks of the Tigris, in many parts, as being from one to two miles broad. Trav. p. 75—78.

south-easterly

south-easterly direction near Antioch, after which it proceeds to the Mediterranean. The Jordan, a river of venerable fame in scriptural history, is only an inconsiderable stream, which, after a short course, loses itself in the Dead Sea.

Lakes.]—Asiatic Turkey contains numerous lakes, but of less considerable extent than those of several other countries. The largest is that of Van, in the north of Curdistan, being about eighty miles in length by forty in breadth. The Dead Sea, or Sea of Sodom, in Syria, is a lake of about fifty miles in length by twelve or thirteen in breadth. Tradition says that this was the plain of Sodom. Many strange stories were related concerning this lake and its borders, which are now exploded. Asia Minor presents a number of inconsiderable lakes, of which the description is better adapted to the minuteness of topography, than to the generalising plan of a geographical view.

Mineralogy.]—The mineralogy of those mountainous countries might be supposed to constitute an important part of their natural history; but this branch of science appears to be in a deplorable state of imperfection. Ancient Lydia was famed for the production of gold; but in modern times no mines are heard of except those of copper, at Gumiscana, three days journey from Trebisond and at Castamboul,* ten days journey from Tocat, on the side towards Angora.†

Mineral waters.]—The most noted mineral waters are those of Prusa in Bythinia. They are situated about a mile to the north-north-west of the city. The baths are magnificent, and paved with marble. The water, which

* Browne, or his commentator, places the copper-mines at Korek, Argona, and Keban. Trav. marginal note, p. 493.

† Tournefort's Trav. vol. 3, p. 272.

which by its smell seems to be impregnated with copper, emits a continual smoke, and is so hot as to boil eggs quite hard in less than twenty minutes; but in the baths it is tempered with water from the cold springs, without which it would be insupportable. There are several other mineral waters in different parts of Asia Minor, but of inferior note.

Soil.]—The soil, though of various kinds, is generally fertile; and might with great advantage be adapted to every agricultural purpose. In Asia Minor, though many districts are rocky, a deep clay prevails in most parts of the country.* Syria contains a still greater number of rocky tracts; but even the rocks are, in many places, fertile and well adapted to various kinds of productions.† In the ancient Chaldea, &c. the soil is mostly a rich loam, except where the want of cultivation and drainage has rendered it swampy, and converted the fertile plains into morasses and deserts.

Climate.]—The climate of those countries which compose the Asiatic part of the Ottoman empire, is in general excellent, being equally favorable to health and vegetation. Heat in general predominates; but there is a peculiar softness and serenity in the air perceivable in few countries on the European side of the Archipelago. Asia Minor, especially, has always been remarked for the excellency of its climate. The heat is considerably tempered by the numerous chains of lofty mountains, some of which are covered with perpetual snow. Even in Syria there is sometimes sharp weather in winter, especially in the hilly parts of the country. A late traveller informs us, that in the

* Browne's Trav. p. 498—500.

† Browne's Miscellaneous Remarks on Syria, Trav. p. 476, &c.

the beginning of the year 1797, a very deep snow lay on the ground at Jerusalem during the space of twelve or thirteen days. It appears also, that this is no unusual circumstance, as the "Catholic convent there has a large subterraneous cistern, into which the snow, melting from the roof and other parts, is conveyed, and supplies the monks with water for a great portion of the year."* The two extremes of cold and heat are chiefly felt in Armenia, Chaldea, and the southernmost parts of Syria on the confines of Arabia.

The mountainous region of Armenia has always been remarked for the coldness of its climate, the severity of its frosts, and the abundance of its snows. The Roman soldiers under Lucullus were astonished on seeing the waters frozen, and the ground covered with snow at the autumnal equinox.† The army of Alexander Severus also suffered extremely from the rigour of the Armenian climate. Many of the Roman soldiers lost their lives or their limbs through the severity of the cold.‡ Tournefort's descriptions perfectly agree with those historical facts. In his journey from Trebisond to Erzerum, the capital of Armenia, he says, that on the 7th of June, they travelled over bald mountains among snow. The cold was intense, and the fogs so thick, that the people of the caravan could not see one another at the distance of four paces. The same traveller informs us, that they found the hills which skirt the plain of Erzerum still covered with snow. They were also told that fresh snow had fallen so late as the 1st of June. At Erzerum their

* Browne's Travels, p. 413, 414.

† Zonarus ap. Tournefort, vol. 3. p. 94.

‡ Tournefort, vol. 3. p. 82, 83. N. B. This was in the morning before sun-rise. They began their day's journey at three o'clock.

hands were so benumbed with cold, that they could not write till an hour after sun-rise; but from ten in the morning till four in the afternoon, the heat was troublesome.* On the contrary, the climate of Chaldea, and the neighbouring parts, is excessively hot. A late traveller observes, that where the ground cannot be irrigated, the excessive heat of the sun destroys all vegetation.† The numerous branches of the Tigris and the Euphrates, which intersect the country, and form various channels of communication between those two great streams, appear to be not natural rivers, but artificial canals, cut in the flourishing age of Babylon, and some of them perhaps even after that period, for the purposes of irrigation and commerce.‡ These rivers, or canals, as Mr. Jackson observes, runs through a soft brown soil, so deep, that where the banks are seven or eight feet high, there is not the least alteration in its appearance. The rapid currents, therefore, constantly deepening the beds of those canals, a circumstance which renders irrigation more difficult than it was formerly, and may contribute to make it more neglected.§ These numerous canals, of various dimensions, together with immense basons, or reservoirs, used formerly to answer the double purpose of draining off the great floods, and of preserving a sufficient quantity of water for irrigating the grounds in the hot and dry

* Tournefort, vol. 3. p. 94. Jackson saw the mountains of Armenia covered with snow in the beginning of August. Jour. p. 183.

† Jackson's Jour. p. 65.

‡ Pliny Hist. Nat. lib. 6. ch. 26...Strabo Geog. lib. 16.—Polyb. Hist. lib. 5.—Jackson's Jour. p. 60. Jackson says, that some of these branches are a quarter of a mile wide.

§ Jackson's Jour. p. 65.

season.

season.* The want of attention to these particulars, so essential to the fertility of the Babylonish territory, has, in conj unction with the heat of the climate, produced the alterations in the face of the country, which astonish all travellers who are acquainted with history. If Egypt were equally neglected, it would present a similar aspect. The saniel, or hot wind, so destructive on the coasts of the Persian Gulph, and in many parts of the deserts of Arabia and Africa, are felt throughout Babylonia. The force and malignity of this wind depend on the surface over which it passes. If it blow over a sandy desert, it acquires an amazing strength and velocity: in passing over grass, or any other vegetation, it soon loses much of its force; and a passage over water deprives it of all its fire. Mr. Jackson, however, says, that he has sometimes felt its effects across the Tigris, where that river was at least a mile broad.† The saniel is the most dangerous between the hours of twelve and three, when the greatest degree of heat prevails in the atmosphere.

Vegetable productions.]—The productions of those extensive regions, which are in general blessed with a fertile soil, and a climate extremely favourable to vegetation, would furnish a copious theme to the naturalist. Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Chaldea, have, from remote antiquity, been famed for their abundant harvests and their plentiful vintage, their pomegranates, their olives, and other excellent fruits. Those countries, according to all historical intelligence, were among the first that enjoyed the

* Herodot. lib. i. ch. 193.

† Jackson's Jour. p. 80, 81. See a further account of the saniel under the article Persia.

 advantage

advantage of cultivation; and during a long succession of ages, were as fertile and flourishing as any on the face of the globe. At present, agriculture is deplorably neglected. In Asia Minor, wheat and barley are the two species of grain that are chiefly cultivated.* These constitute also the principal agricultural productions of Syria. In the latter country, a considerable quantity of tobacco, and some cotton are produced; and the culture of them, as well as of the vine and the olive, might be carried to an unlimited extent. Syria affords a great variety of wines, which in that country are mostly prepared by boiling, immediately after their expression from the grape. The chief of the Syrian wines, is the vino d'oro, or golden wine of Mount Libanus; but the quantity produced is small. It is, as its name implies, of a bright golden colour, and bears a high price. This wine is not boiled, but left to purify itself by keeping.† Asia Minor, as well as Syria, produces excellent grapes and olives, as well as mulberry trees in abundance, so that any quantity of silk might be produced. Asiatic Turkey, in fine, would, with proper cultivation, yield an exuberance of all the various kinds of grain and of all the most valuable productions of the finest countries of Europe and Asia. At present, however, these beautiful regions are in a miserable state of decline, and their ancient fertility is difficult to recognise amidst the scantiness of their present vegetation. The chilling hand of despotism has checked the efforts of industry, and reduced many of the most fertile tracts almost to a desert. The forests, however, yet display their native luxuriance. Syria is far from being destitute of wood, although

* Browne's Trav. p. 500 † Ibid. 432.

Mount

Mount Libanus yet retains only a few large cedars, the venerable relics of its ancient grandeur. But no country in the world surpasses Asia Minor, in the excellence, and few equal it in the variety and abundance of its timber. The oak, the cedar, the beech, the cypress, the elm, the sycamore, and various other species of trees, all in the highest perfection of size and quality, shade the summits and sides of the numerous mountains; and the shores of the Euxine display many gloomy forests of great extent. The abundance of timber supplies the inhabitants with fuel, as no coal has been discovered in any part of the Asiatic dominions of Turkey. Among the productions of those countries, may be reckoned a variety of drugs used in dying, and of others which are valuable articles in the materia medica.

Zoology.]—The domestic zoology of Asiatic Turkey is not greatly different from that of the southern countries of Europe, except in comprising the camel, which is more common in Syria, and in the provinces on the Euphrates and the Tigris, than in Asia Minor. The best horses are of the Arabian breed, and are sparingly fed with barley and minced straw, in order to inure them to abstinence. But mules and asses are in more general use. Of the horned cattle, little is said by travellers: they seem, however, to be inferior to those of Europe. Beef is neither plentiful nor good; but the mutton is greatly superior, and in some parts excellent. The ibex appears on the mountains of Caucasus. Asia Minor abounds with deer, hares, large partridges, and a variety of other game. The ferocious animals are not few in number. Jackals range in troops. The hyæna and the wild boar are common in the forests. The lion is frequently seen on

the banks of the Tigris, but seldom appears to the west of the Euphrates. Numerous herds of wild swine are seen on the banks of those rivers, and many of them grow to an enormous and almost incredible size. The prohibition of eating their flesh, which the Mahomedans consider as unclean, tends greatly to the preservation of those animals.* The cities and villages here, as well as in Egypt and European Turkey, swarm with dogs, which wander at large without any owners. The birds of Asiatic Turkey are numerous, and display a great variety of kinds. The neighbouring seas abound with various sorts of fish, some of which are excellent.

Natural curiosities.]—Those extensive and mountainous countries must present a variety of striking features and sublime scenery, highly interesting to the natural philosopher. These, however, have been little explored by travellers, who are obliged to keep to the beaten track with the caravans. The numerous troops of banditti that infest every quarter of those countries, have rendered their distant recesses too dangerous to tempt the most ardent curiosity, and shut up the most interesting scenes of nature from scientific observation.

Antiquities, &c.]—The antiquities of Asiatic Turkey, once the splendid seat of the arts, are too numerous to be comprised within the limits of a short description. But they have been so often described, as to render a repetition unnecessary. It may therefore suffice to remark, that the most interesting, as well as the most splendid of the ruins, which all-consuming time, and

* Mr. Jackson says, that some of these hogs weigh ten hundred weight Eng. He describes them as being of a deep red colour, and not afraid of being attacked. Jour. p. 45, 114.

the

the more destructive hand of barbarism, have left remaining, are those of Palmyra, about 150 miles to the south-east of Aleppo, at the northern extremity of the sandy deserts, which extend to the interior of Arabia. They consist of a superb colonnade, extending about 4000 feet in length, terminating with a noble mausoleum, temples, porticoes, &c. all of the most beautiful materials, and most elaborate workmanship. The approach is through a narrow plain, enclosed between rocky hills, and lined with the remains of antiquity. The valley opening all at once, the most striking objects burst upon the eye, and the spectator might think himself under the power of enchantment.* With these magnificent ruins, the miserable huts of the Arabs, dispersed near and among them, form a striking contrast. The history of Palmyra is highly interesting and curious, but extremely obscure. Nothing, however, is more certain, than that this city was once the capital of a great and powerful kingdom, which having supported the declining glory of Rome in the reign of Gallienus, afterwards rejected her alliance, and deprived her of many of her provinces. The Palmyranean war, the capture of the city, and of its celebrated queen Zenobia, who had reigned for some time in great splendor, and employed the famous critic, Longinus, as her minister, together with the massacre of its inhabitants by the emperor Aurelian, are minutely related by Gibbon, who has carefully collected the original authorities.† This, indeed, appears to be the only luminous period of its history;

* As no adequate idea of those stupendous ruins could be formed from any verbal description, however voluminous and minute, the best reference may be made to Mr. Wood's elegant drawings.

† Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 2.

and the reigns of Odenathus, and his widow Zenobia, the chief epoch of its splendor. Before, and since that period all is obscurity.

The origin of Palmyra is hidden in the shades of antiquity; and the steps by which it gradually arose to opulence and greatness have been left unnoticed by historians. It is generally supposed to owe its foundation to Solomon, and to be the city of Tadmor, which he is said to have built in the wilderness. This, however, is a mere conjecture. But its origin is not more obscure than its rise to opulence and power, in such a desolate situation, is wonderful. It has, with some probability, been supposed, that the territory in which Palmyra is situated was originally fertile, and that its present sterility is owing to the incroachment of the sands, a circumstance of which Egypt and some other countries afford several instances.* But it is now understood that it owed its wealth to the Indian trade, which its caravans carried on with the mercantile parts of Syria. Being thus risen to opulence, its monarchs became powerful, and the conquests of Odenathus and Zenobia adding the spoils of war to the riches accumulated by commerce, Palmyra suddenly attained to the zenith of its splendor; and its most magnificent edifices are supposed to date their erection from that period, which coincides with the reign of Gallienus. This opinion is corroborated by the proportions of the columns and the style of architecture, which, notwithstanding the excellence, both of the materials and the workmanship, are not in the first degree of purity. The emperor Justinian made some efforts to restore this

* See the various remarks of Savary, Sonnini, Volney, Browne, Denon, and other travellers, on the country about Alexandria, the plain of Memphis and other parts of Egypt.

this city to its former splendour, but without effect. It had laid some centuries in ruins: its mercantile inhabitants were no more: its trade was turned into other channels. In these circumstances, possessing no natural advantages, and its commerce being irretrievably lost, all attempts for its restoration proved ineffectual. It soon sunk into obscurity, and dwindled down into its present ruinous state. The ancient opulence and splendor of Palmyra in such a situation, far distant from any river, and surrounded with deserts, constitute a curious historical phœnomenon, affording a memorable instance of the effects of commerce, and of the triumph of industry over natural obstacles.

The ruins of Balbec, the ancient Heliopolis, near the foot of Mount Libanus, though somewhat less interesting from situation, are, in magnificence, very little, if any thing, inferior to those of Palmyra, and even surpass them in purity of architecture. The most remarkable of those remains of antiquity are the ruins of a temple supposed to have been dedicated to the sun. The portico, the courts, &c. have been inexpressibly superb, and the whole plan appears to have been extremely bold and magnificent. The period in which those edifices were erected is uncertain. Some ascribe them to the reign of Antoninus: others suppose them to be of a higher antiquity.

The site of ancient Troy has lately been a favorite scene of investigation. The Troade, or plain of Troy, extending from the foot of Mount Ida, has been accurately examined and ably delineated. Modern research, however, has not been able to discover any interesting remains of Trojan antiquity. Several hillocks of earth, resembling the barrows of our ancestors, such as perhaps in every country constituted the first funereal

 monuments,

monuments, are, however, supposed to indicate the tombs of Achilles, Patroclus, and Hector, and some other heroes of the Iliad.

Asiatic Turkey, which once displayed all that is magnificent in architecture and sculpture, abounds with numerous remains of antiquity, especially temples, which are mostly converted into mosques, and disfigured with barbarian alterations or additions. The curiosities of Jerusalem have been so often described, that the subject is grown trite, even to general readers. These, indeed, are remarkable rather on account of the important transactions of which they excite the recollection, than for any display of the arts. They have also undergone so many alterations, in consequence of the frequent revolutions to which this ancient capital of Judea has been exposed, and are so greatly disguised by the tricks and traditions of the Greek and Armenian priests, who subsist by forgeries, that it is difficult at this time to trace the scenes of Christ's passion.

CHAP. II.

Principal Cities and Towns—Edifices.—Islands.

ALEPPO, in Syria, is, in regard to population, wealth, and splendor, the principal city of Asiatic Turkey. This city is well built, and the streets are paved with stone. The tall cypress trees in contrast with the white minarets of numerous mosques, give it a most picturesque appearance. The houses are clean, airy, and commodious. Here is no navigable river; but a small stream, called the Coik, passes through this city, and is lost in a marsh on the western side. The city is supplied with water by an aqueduct. Aleppo is supposed to contain about 250,000 inhabitants; and the population and buildings seem to increase; but in proportion as the town is crowded, the adjacent villages are deserted. The people of Aleppo are distinguished by an air of politeness which is not to be frequently observed in the other towns of Syria; and in their dress they follow chiefly the fashion of Constantinople. The prevailing language is the Arabic, although the Turkish is frequently spoken. The women of Aleppo are generally of a brown complexion, and have something of a masculine appearance. The sheriffs, or descendants of Mahomet, are exceedingly numerous in Aleppo. They consist of persons of all ranks, from the highest imaun to the lowest peasant. Their number, in this place, is estimated at nearly

60,000.

60,000.* The janissaries do not exceed 15,000. Between these two factions there are continual disputes for offices of power and emolument. The sheriffs being superior in number, and the janissaries in valour, the two factions are nearly balanced, and their contests seldom terminate without bloodshed. Aleppo is now what Palmyra once was, the centre of Syrian commerce. It maintains a commercial intercourse with Constantinople, Damascus, Antioch, Tripoli, Ladakia, Bagdad and Bussora. Three or four caravans proceed annually through Asia Minor from Aleppo to Constantinople. Large caravans also frequently arrive from Bagdad and Bussora with coffee from Arabia, tobacco and cherry-tree pipes from Persia, and the muslins, shawls, and other merchandise of India.† The manufactures of Aleppo are chiefly those of silk and cotton. They are in a flourishing state, and carried on with great spirit both by Christians and Mahomedans. This is one of the towns in the Turkish empire which displays the greatest appearance of industry. Consuls from most of the European powers reside here to attend to the interests of their respective nations.

Damascus.]—Damascus may hold the next rank in magnitude and importance, being supposed to contain about 180,000 inhabitants. This city is situated in an extensive plain, filled with gardens, to the extent of more than twelve miles in length by above four and a half in breadth, and abounding in the greatest variety

* Browne's Trav. p. 441, &c.

† The coffee is brought round from Mocha to the Persian Gulph. Browne, p. 443. For the most recent information concerning Aleppo, see Browne's Travels. For the most ample description, consult Russel's Aleppo.

riety of the most delicious fruits. "The air is excellent, and the soil exuberant in fertility."* At a small distance to the west rises a ridge of the Anti-Libanus. Above the city, the river Baradé is divided into numerous streams, which being distributed among the gardens, afford all of them a plentiful supply of water. The walls of Damascus are almost circular: the suburbs are large and irregular. This city is the seat of a considerable trade. It was once famous for its manufactures of steel.. The sabres of Damascus were acknowledged to be the best in the world, and held in the highest estimation both in Asia and Europe. They could never be broken, though bent in the most violent manner; and they maintained such a power of edge, that neither iron, nor even common steel, could resist their stroke. But the famous Timur, or Tamerlane, on his conquest of Syria in the beginning of the fifteenth century, removed all the manufactures of steel into Persia; and the art of fabricating the Damascene blades appears now to be lost. At present, the chief manufactures are those of silk, cotton, and soap.† The environs of Damascus are extremely delightful. The fruit trees in the vicinity are so numerous as to supply the city with fire-wood, as well as with part of the timber for building. The walnut and Lombardy poplar are also used for the latter purpose.‡

* Browne's Trav. p. 455. Mr. Browne, however, says afterwards, that "the air is not esteemed equally salubrious with that of some other parts of the province," p. 480.

† Mr. Browne estimates the population of Damascus at 200,000. He says, that the houses are remarkably large and commodious, well supplied with water, and richly furnished with sofas, carpets, &c. Travels, p. 458 470.

‡ Browne, ubi supra.

Damascus

Damascus is well known to be one of the most ancient cities in the world, although its remote antiquity and the uncertainty of oriental chronology render it impossible to fix the æra of its foundation. The sacred writings inform us, that it was long the capital of an independent and powerful kingdom. After being involved in all the revolutions of Syria, in its subjection to the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans, it fell under the dominion of the Caliph Omar, A.D. 635. It became afterwards the metropolis of the Caliphate, and until the seat of empire was removed to Bagdad, was in all probability the most splendid city of Asia.

Aleppo and Damascus being the most considerable cities of Asiatic Turkey, merit the first places in descriptive arrangement; and it may not be amiss to assign the next to Antioch, Jerusalem, and Bagdad, as they are also situated in the southern part of the empire, although they are more remarkable for their historical fame and ancient grandeur, than for their modern importance.

Antioch.]—Antioch, long the capital of the Grecian kingdom of Syria, afterwards one of the principal cities of the Roman empire, and inferior only to Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria, is now in a ruinous state. The vast extent and strength of its walls, flanked with numerous towers, proclaim its ancient opulence and powers of defence; but the houses are chiefly confined to one corner.* It stands on the southern declivity of a hill, on the banks of the river Orontes, in a healthful climate, and a fertile country. The castle, which is large, but in a ruinous state, is seated on the summit of the hill, and com-

* Browne Trav. p. 482.

mands

mands an extensive prospect. Antioch is situated about fifteen miles from the sea. The river Orontes is not navigable, but its mouth forms a harbour for smaller vessels.

Jerusalem.]—Jerusalem, so celebrated in ancient history, and distinguished as the cradle of Christianity and the theatre of the most important transactions that mark the history of the world, is now a place of a mean appearance, but is yet supposed to contain about 18,000 or 20,000 inhabitants.* It is situated in a rocky country, amidst an amphitheatre of hills, and although it stands on eminences, it is almost surrounded by others of superior height. This city, so famed for wealth and splendor in the days of Solomon, is now chiefly supported by the piety of pilgrims, and swarms with mendicants who resort thither to share in their alms. The church of the Holy Sepulchre, of which each denomination of Christians has a distinct part allotted to its use, appears to be in great want of repair; the cedar beams are falling, and the whole roof is in a ruinous state. The Armenian convent is an elegant building, and so extensive as to contain accommodations for 1000 pilgrims. A great part of the population of Jerusalem is Christian. The Christians and Mahomedans of this city, inspired with all the false zeal of fanaticism and narrow minded bigotry, entertain against each other an implacable aversion, both parties being equally forgetful that universal benevolence to his fellow mortals is the most acceptable service that weak and imperfect man, can render to a God infinitely perfect and good.

The environs of Jerusalem are hilly and romantic. The best view of the city is from the Mount of Olives.

* Browne's Trav. p. 416.

From

From that eminence may also be discovered the Dead Sea, bearing nearly south-east, reflecting a whitish gleam, and terminating the prospect of a rocky tract of country.

Bethlehem.]—Bethlehem, at the distance of six miles from Jerusalem, is happily situated in regard to soil, air, and water. The *fons signatus* is an exuberant spring, and at a small distance is the *deliciæ solomonis*,* where a beautiful rivulet flows murmuring down a valley. Vines, olives, and fig trees, flourish abundantly in the neighbourhood. Water was formerly conveyed by a low aqueduct from Bethlehem to Jerusalem.

Bagdad.]—Bagdad, once the magnificent capital of the Caliphs, is seated on the eastern bank of the Tigris, not far to the north of ancient Babylon. By a late traveller it is represented as a large and populous city, extending along the banks of the river the length of three miles, by about two miles in breadth, forming a parallelogram.† It is much better built than any other city in that part of the country, although greatly inferior in this respect to many in Europe. Like most of the Turkish cities, the houses have the appearance of prisons. Each house is built round an open square or court, and without any windows next the street. They are generally of brick, and have flat roofs, on which the inhabitants sleep. The streets are very narrow and dusty, and swarm with scorpions, tarantulas, and other noxious insects, of which the stings are dangerous, and often prove mortal. Many

* The delight of Solomon. For Jerusalem and its environs, see Browne, p. 412, &c.

† Jackson's Journ. p. 91. Pinkerton states the population at only 20,000, but does not quote his authority. Geog. vol. 2, p. 25.

of

of the public buildings, as the mosques, the minarets, the hummums, &c. are built of hewn stone, and make a good appearance. Here is also an extensive bazar, well supplied with a variety of merchandize. Bagdad is a place of considerable trade. The Armenians are the principal merchants. Those of Mosul send great quantities of copper down the Tigris to Bagdad upon rafts of timber. On their arrival the rafts are generally sold, wood being very scarce at Bagdad. The copper is afterwards shipped for Bussora on board of large dows. The voyage thither and back is usually performed in about six months, a considerable length of time for the distance, although not more than is required by the unskilfulness of the boatmen, the awkward construction of the vessels, and the difficult navigation of the Tigris and the Euphrates. The manufactures are few, and confined to those of immediate use. Mr. Jackson supposes that Bagdad contains, or at least did contain when he was there in 1797, more treasure than any other city of equal size in the world. The conjecture is bold, but seems to be warranted by the immense riches of the kya, or prime minister of the bashaw, who being murdered by conspirators, an exact account was taken of his property, which amounted to the enormous sum of 3,000,000*l*. sterling, accumulated by various modes of extortion. The environs of Bagdad have a disagreeable and dreary aspect. On the northern and western sides of the city, there is no water, and scarcely any vegetation. Towards the east there are excellent gardens, which extend about four miles along the banks of the river. But on the opposite side of the Tigris, the country is cultivated, and supplies the city

with fruits and vegetables. The heat of the climate is excessive.*

Bagdad was founded A.D. 762, by the Caliph Almansor, the second of the race of the Abassides, and during the space of 496 years, it contained the imperial residence of his successors. The extraordinary magnificence of Bagdad, under the first caliphs of that dynasty, has been celebrated and undoubtedly amplified by the fertile imagination and national vanity of the Arabian writers. Their accounts are too romantic to be received without considerable abatements. It cannot, however, be doubted, that in the ninth and tenth centuries Bagdad was the largest, the most opulent, and the most splendid city of Asia, and indeed of the world, if we except Constantinople.†

Bussora.]—Bussora, although situated in Arabia, is comprized within the Turkish empire. It stands on the Schat-El-Arab, or the æstuary of the Tigris and Euphrates, and is a large, populous, and commercial city. Mr. Jackson represents it as more extensive than Bagdad, being about four miles in length, and three in breadth. The walls by which it is surrounded, are chiefly of mud. The houses are mean, being built chiefly of mud, with a small proportion of brick and clumsy timbers, forming on the whole very uncouth pieces of architecture. They are on the same general plan as at Bagdad, although of a greatly inferior construction, and the people are in the same

* Bagdad is described by Tavernier, tom. 1. Thevenot, par. 2. Niebuhr, tom. 2. Bell's Trav. Irwine's Trav. Jackson's Journ. p. 91, &c. The last is one of the most recent descriptions of this city.

† For the ancient splendor of Bagdad, see D'Herbelot. Biblioth. Orient. p. 529—590, but his information is derived from the Arabian writers.

habit

habit of sleeping on the tops of their flat roofs. There are several mosques and minarets, some of which make a handsome appearance. Most of the public buildings are of brick, but the English factory is the best structure in the city. The Roman Catholic church is also a tolerably good building. The streets of Bussora are so extremely narrow, as scarcely to admit more than one horse, and so very rough that riding through them is difficult. The bazar, or market place, is near two miles in length, and well supplied. European manufactures are scarce and dear, but the preference is given to those of England. Our superfine broad cloth and watches, sell for the double of their home price.* The population consists of Turks, Armenians, and Arabs. The Turks are generally persons employed under government. The Armenians are merchants, and some of them are very respectable. Their trade with the East Indies is very considerable, and they export thither great quantities of copper which is brought down the Tigris from Mosul. The Arabs are the most numerous class of inhabitants. Among these are some persons in tolerable circumstances, but great numbers are extremely poor, and labour very hard for small wages. They can, however, support themselves and their families at an easy expence; their dress costs them little, their food consists of bread and dates, and their beverage is water.†

Bussora is a place of great commercial resort, being

* Jackson's Journ. p. 30.

† Jackson's Journ. p. 35, 36. Notwithstanding the simplicity of their food, Mr. Jackson says, that the Arabs have, generally speaking, twice the strength of Europeans ! ! ! Will our beef-eaters and beer drinkers believe it. Mr. Jackson gives no estimate of the population of Bussora. Mr. Pinkerton states it at 50,000, Geog. vol. 2, p. 24.

 frequented

frequented by numerous vessels from Europe and India. It is also the great emporium of trade between Asiatic Turkey and the more eastern countries. This city stands near the edge of the great desert, but that region of dreary sterility, is bordered by a rich and well cultivated tract of a few miles in breadth, extending along the banks of the river, and watered by numerous canals. Mr. Jackson says, "that in a walk of ten miles, the country through which he passed had a delightful appearance, being well watered and in luxuriant vegetation. Extensive crops of wheat, barley, and paddy, were nearly ripe, and of fruit and vegetables the quantity was immense."* This description may give some idea of what ancient Babylonia once was, and what it might again be, by a proper attention to the canals, and a judicious management of the waters. To this description of Bussora, it must be added that there are few places on the surface of the globe, where the climate is more intensely hot.

After this review of the southern cities of Asiatic Turkey, our attention must be directed to those of the northern provinces.

Smyrna.]—Smyrna is, in respect both of population, wealth, and commercial importance, the principal city of Asia Minor, and the third in Asiatic Turkey, ranking next to Aleppo and Damascus. This city possesses one of the finest ports that can be imagined, being seated at the bottom of a bay, which is capable of containing the largest navy in the world.† The goodness of the port, indeed, has preserved the existence of Smyrna, and caused it to be repeatedly rebuilt, after having been destroyed by earthquakes, a calamity to which most parts of Asiatic Turkey

* Jackson's Journ. p. 28. † Tournefort, vol. 3, p. 332.

are

are exceedingly subject. The frequent visits of the pestilence, greatly impede the population and prosperity of this city.* It is still, however, a flourishing place, being the centre of the trade of Asia Minor, and containing at least above 100,000 inhabitants. The foundation of Smyrna is generally ascribed to Alexander the Great. During the wars between the Turks and the Byzantine empire, it fell into a state of decline. In 1402 it was taken by Timur, or Tamerlane, with a terrible slaughter of its inhabitants.

Prusa.]—Prusa, the capital of ancient Bythinia, is a beautiful city, in a romantic and delightful situation at the foot of the first small hills on the northern side of Mount Olympus, and on the edge of a spacious plain, full of mulberry and fruit trees. The city is well paved, and abundantly supplied with water by the springs which descend from Mount Olympus. The mosques are fine, the minarets are reckoned to be 300 in number; all the public buildings are good, the caravanseras are commodious, and the warehouses and shops well stocked with all the commodities of the Levant. Prusa is also enlivened by the vicinity of the hot baths, and its manufactures of silk, &c. are the best in Turkey. Tournefort reckons, that when he was there, this city contained 10,000 or 12,000 families of Turks, 400 families of Jews, 500 of Armenians, and 300 of Greeks, which, at five to a house, must have amounted to about 60,000 persons. The suburbs and the environs are extremely fine and pleasant, the surrounding country presenting a delightful landscape. Tournefort says, that Prusa in respect of situation and the abundance of springs,

* Chandler, p. 64.

greatly resembles Grenada in Spain.* This city was, during some time, the seat of the Ottoman emperors, and contains many of their tombs.

Angora.]—Next to Prusa may be ranked Angora, which is one of the finest cities in Anatolia, or Asia Minor, and contains about 45,000 inhabitants. Its appearance is agreeable and striking, being in a lofty situation, and conspicuous at some distance. The city has been surrounded with a strong wall, and the marks of a ditch are visible. The castle is very ancient, and in former times may have been considered as impregnable, being seated on high and perpendicular rocks. Angora is a place well calculated for defence, being commanded by no adjacent heights. It is one of the handsomest cities in that part of the world; the streets are well paved, and it displays numerous marks of its ancient magnificence.† Among its remains of antiquity, are the ruins of a magnificent Curia, erected in the time of Augustus. The circumjacent country is famous for that particular breed of goats which furnish the finest hair for the manufacture of camblets and shawls. Some of the latter are said to have been made equal in quality to those of Cashmir.‡ Mr. Browne was informed, that this extraordinary breed of goats is on the decline; but he remarks, that it may be easily augmented, as there is a great extent of country which is capable of supplying food for their flocks. Tournefort fixes its limits within the distance of four or five days journey from Angora,

* See Tournefort's descrip. vol. 3, p. 290, &c. Browne's Trav. p. 495. Pinkerton estimates the population at 80,000, Geog. vol. 2, p. 24.

† Browne's Descrip. Trav. p. 495, &c. Tournefort's Descrip. vol. 3, p. 290, &c.

‡ See description of the goats and cats of Angora. Buffon Hist. Nat.

and

and says that the goats degenerate if carried any farther.* The famous Angora cats, are confined to the same district as the goats. The soil of this country is a fine red marl. But neither the soil, the situation, nor the air, has any peculiarity so striking as to afford any probable ground for investigating the origin of these two remarkable breeds of animals, so dissimilar from all that have been discovered in any other region of the globe.

Angora derives great celebrity from a memorable event of a very remote period. This city appears to be the ancient Ancyra, the same with the Sebaste Tectosagon, built by a colony of Gauls from the neighbourhood of Thoulouse.† It is probable, however, that the Gauls only rebuilt the city, as Ancyra existed in the time of Alexander, almost a century before their arrival. This band of Gallic adventurers, set out from the southern provinces of France, on the bold enterprize of making conquests in the Levant. They were under the conduct of several commanders, and having ravaged Greece, plundered the temple of Delphos of its immense riches, and subdued the country on the western side of the Hellespont, as far as Byzantium, they passed over into Asia, and spread terror as far as Mount Taurus. They settled in Ionia and Etolia, and seized on Ancyra, the present Angora, which might be regarded as the capital of the whole colony. The country in which they established themselves, acquired the name of Galatia, or Gallo Grecia, and it was to their posterity that St. Paul addressed his epistle. The Gauls established themselves in Asia about 240 years before the Christian æra, and main-

* Browne, p. 497. Tournefort, vol. 3, letter 9, p. 301.

† Pliny, lib. 5, cap 42.

tained their independence till after the defeat of Antiochus by the Romans. They assisted that prince, and their troops formed a considerable part of his army. But this alliance involving them in a war with the Romans, they were defeated near Mount Olympus by the Consul Manlius, who also reduced Ancyra, and obliged the Gauls to accept of peace on such terms as he proposed. The different provinces or states of Galatia, were united in one kingdom, tributary to Rome, which in the reign of Augustus was reduced to a Roman province. Such was the commencement and the termination of the Gallic empire in Asia Minor, which may be ranked among the most singular migrations of ancient times. Angora being situated towards the centre of Anatolia, has been frequently exposed to the calamities of war, and has undergone various revolutions. But it is particularly remarkable, on account of the battle which was fought there on the 28th of July, 1402, between Bajazet, emperor of the Turks, and Timur, the famous khan of the Mongols. This memorable action took place in a plain on the south side of the city. The issue is universally known; the Turks were defeated with a terrible slaughter, Bajazet was made prisoner, and the Ottoman empire was brought to the verge of destruction.

Tocat.]—Tocat is a flourishing and populous city in a romantic country and a singular situation, among rugged and perpendicular rocks of marble,* The city is tolerably built and well paved. Tournefort reckons in this city 20,000 Turkish, and 4,000 Armenian families, beside 300 or 400 of Greeks, and about 1,000

* Tournefort says, that there is not in the world so singular a situation as Tocat. Letter 9, p. 270

janissaries and some spahis, which must compose a population of at least 120,000; but a late geographical writer estimates it, with greater probability, at only the half of that number.* Tocat may be regarded as the centre of the inland trade of Anatolia; and caravans resort thither from all parts of the country. It is also noted for its great manufacture of copper utensils, of which a vast quantity is sent to Constantinople and into Egypt. The inhabitants of Tocat, with those of Aleppo, Angora, and Prusa, appear to be the most industrious of all those of Asiatic Turkey.

Diarbekar and Mosul are also places of considerable extent and population. Both these towns are within the limits of the ancient Assyria, and both are situated on the banks of the Tigris.

Diarbekar]—Diarbekar is the capital of a province of the same name, and is near the borders of Armenia. It is a large and populous city, pleasantly situated on an eminence, commanding an extensive and delightful prospect over a fertile country, in which the winding stream of the Tigris adds much to the beauty of the scene. The houses of Diarbekar are built of hewn stone, and the streets are well paved. Many of the public edifices are elegant. The Armenian cathedral is a fine structure about the length of Westminster-hall, but not so wide. Here are several manufactures of copper, iron, wool, cotton, silk, &c. Some of these are carried to a tolerable degree of perfection, but the woollen cloths are of an inferior quality, although their

* Tournefort, p. 271. It is difficult to say, in what degree, or from what causes the population may have decreased since the time of this traveller; but his account is evidently exaggerated, unless it be attributed to errors of the press, which is probably the case. Pinkerton's Geog. vol. 2, p. 24.

wool

wool is of considerable fineness. A late traveller observes, that the superfine cloth worn by the principal people is of English manufacture; nor is it unworthy of remark, that in this sequestered part of Asia, he saw many watches which had been made in London, and were marked with the names of the makers.* People of all descriptions seem to enjoy great liberty at Diarbekar. The various sects of Christians have their churches and chapels, and each one follows his own mode of worship without molestation. Mosul is generally supposed to stand on the site of ancient Nineveh. That celebrated metropolis of the Assyrian empire, however, has so long since been annihilated, that the revolutions of ages and the total obliteration of all its vestiges, render it extremely difficult, or rather impossible to ascertain its situation. Mosul is a large town, pleasantly situated on a declivity on the right bank of the Tigris. It is surrounded by a strong and lofty wall built of hewn stone, and the mosques, minarets, hummums, &c. are constructed of the same materials. Besides these there are several handsome buildings; but the space within the walls is not wholly occupied with houses, many void places being covered with ruins, which shews that its population has decreased. The bazar is large, and well supplied: almost every article, except clothing, is moderate. The people are industrious and ingenious, and excel in various manufactures. Their saddles and trappings for horses are very elegant, and their carpets of silk with flowers worked in them, seem to vie with the finest specimens of European ingenuity. The manufactures in copper and iron are very considerable. The mountains to the northward afford an abundant supply of the ores; and

* Jackson's Journey, p. 162.

a great

a great variety of articles made of copper and iron, especially of the former, as well as great quantities of the unmanufactured metals are sent down the Tigris to Bagdad and Bussora.* The climate in this part of Asia is, during the summer season, extremely hot. Mr. Jackson says, that his exposure to the sun in the month of July took off the skin from his hands and his face. The same traveller represents the saniel, or hot wind, as extremely dangerous and destructive in the neighbourhood of Mosul, although it has generally been supposed that it never ascends so high.† It has even been asserted that those winds never pass the walls of Bagdad.

Erzerun.]—Erzerun, the capital of Armenia, is only a poor place; but it contains about 24,000 or 25,000 inhabitants.

Trebisond.]—Trebisond, on the coast of the Black Sea, a Grecian colony, famous for being the first friendly asylum, which Xenophon with his 10,000 had the good fortune to reach, and which in after times, was erected into an independent Greek empire, or rather principality, when Constantinople was taken by the Latins, is only an inconsiderable place.‡ The shores of the Euxine are now, indeed, almost deserted; and extensive forests occupy the place of agricultural scenes.

Sinope, Amisus, and Heraclea, &c.]—The Grecian colonies of Sinope, Amisus, and Heraclea, the first distinguished by being the capital of the kingdom of Pontus; the second, famous for its resistance against

* Jackson's Journ. p. 132. See also what has been already said on this subject in speaking of Bussora and Bagdad.

† Jackson, p. 132. He says, that in the summer season more people are destroyed by the saniel than in any other way.

‡ Tournefort, p. 69, &c.

the arms of Lucullus; and the third, for its naval power, are now dwindled down to a state of insignificance.* The same may be observed of Sardis, the splendid capital of the kingdom of Lydia, and the royal residence of Crœsus, its wealthy monarch, as also of Ephesus, once so much famed for the magnificent temple of its goddess. Many other cities of great historical celebrity, and which in ancient times were populous, rich, and splendid, are now sunk into paltry villages under the destructive hand of Turkish despotism.

Edifices.]—Asiatic Turkey cannot boast of its modern edifices. Under this head nothing can be described but what has been already mentioned. The Turks erect no magnificent structures. The mosques make the best appearance, but these have mostly been Christian churches. The minarets, indeed, which are often exceedingly lofty and slender, are an Oriental kind of architecture, unknown in the west.

ISLANDS.

Cyprus.]—The principal island belonging to Turkey in Asia, is Cyprus, which is about 160 English miles in length by 70 at its greatest breadth. This island is pervaded by a chain of mountains, among which is the Cyprian Olympus. There is no river of any note, and the small rivulets are mostly dried up in the summer; but there are several lakes and marshes which render the air damp and unwholesome. Cyprus produced

* Plutarch in Lucullo.—Tournefort, vol. 3, lett. 4, p. 50, &c. 41, &c. 23, &c. Tournefort thinks that Heraclea must have been one of the finest cities of the east.

formerly

formerly an abundance of copper, and some say of gold and silver; but little is now said of its mineralogy.* The soil is in general fertile, but agriculture is greatly neglected. The chief productions are silk, cotton, wines, turpentine, and timber. The Cyprian wines are deservedly celebrated, and the oranges are excellent. The chief cities are Nicosia, the residence of the pacha, and Famagosta.† The history of this island ascends to a remote and obscure antiquity. After being governed from time immemorial by its own princes, it became at last an appendage to the Persian monarchy, to which, however, it was not always subject, but sometimes rebellious and hostile. It was afterwards subject to the Ptolemies of Egypt, till it fell with that kingdom under the Roman dominion. After the subversion of the western empire it remained an appendage to that of the east, and was at last usurped by a Greek prince, who was expelled by Richard I, king of England, at the time of his croisade. This monarch bestowed the kingdom of Cyprus on the house of Lusignan, as a compensation for the loss of Jerusalem. In the fifteenth century, the heiress of that house resigned this isle to the Venetians; but in 1570 it fell under the dominion of the Turks. The population of this large and fertile island is so greatly diminished under Turkish despotism, that it is supposed not to exceed 50,000. The ancient Cypriots were remarked for their amorous disposition and effeminate manners, to which frequent allusions are made by the poets. The goddess Venus was feigned to have

* Mariti's Trav. p. 25.

† Nicosia stands in the centre of the island in the middle of a large plain, bounded on all sides with mountains at the distance of ten miles, and the country all round has an animated appearance. Mariti, p. 93 and 98.

been

been a native of this isle, and here she was worshipped with obscene and licentious rites. The Cypriots of the present age are of a good stature and elegant form, but poor and depressed under their despotic government.*

The chief islands of the Archipelago that can, with geographical propriety, be considered as belonging to Asia, are those of Mytelene, Scio, Samos, Cos, and Rhodes: to these may be added Tenedos, rendered famous by the siege of Troy.

Mytelene, or Lesbos.]—Mytelene, or Lesbos, is one of the most valuable, as well as the most celebrated isles of the Archipelago. It is about forty English miles in length, and in the widest part not less than twenty-four in breadth. This isle has a mountainous appearance, but is agreeably diversified with corn-fields, vineyards, and plantations of olives, myrtles, and figs. The mountains are cool, and many of them covered with wood. Mytelene produces excellent wheat and oil, and the best figs in the Archipelago.† The climate is pleasant and salubrious. The ancient city of Mytelene, which was once large and magnificent, is now dwindled down into the petty town of Castro, which, however, has a good harbour. This island, indeed, has several fine ports. Mytelene makes a conspicuous figure in the Grecian history, and was the scene of many important transactions. It was equally celebrated for the excellence of its wines and the beauty of its women; and neither of these have lost

* Mariti states the population at about 40,000. Trav. p. 22. He asserts that here, as in other parts of the Levant, the women are far more numerous than the men.

† Tournefort, vol. 2, lett. 2, p. 73.

their

their ancient reputation.* It is not less famous for the number of illustrious men which it has produced, and whose names would compose a long catalogue. Sappho, the celebrated poetess, and Pittacus, one of the seven sages of Greece, were natives of Mytelene. Epicurus read lectures in this place; and here Aristotle resided two years. But the ancient inhabitants were not less noted for their dissolute manners, than for their genius. To live like a Lesbian, was, among the Greeks, a proverbial expression used to denote the extreme of licentiousness. In later times, this island produced the two famous corsairs, Horice and Hayradin Barbarossa, who founded the piratical states on the coast of Barbary.

Scio]—Scio, the ancient Chios, is about thirty-six English miles in length, and about thirteen in medial breadth. This island is mountainous and rugged. The air is wholesome. The principal productions are wine and fruits, turpentine, mastic, &c. but the quantity of corn produced does not suffice for the consumption. The mastic is a gum, which distils from a particular tree. When held in the mouth, it gives an agreeable sweetness to the breath, and for that reason is greatly esteemed by the ladies of the seraglio.† It is also regarded as a good stomachic and styptic. The wines of Chios were not less famed than those of Lesbos. They were esteemed both agreeable and salubrious. The females cf this island are celebrated for their beauty; but the awkward stiffness of their dress is a disadvantage to their personal charms. Scio, the chief town, is much resorted to by shipping; but the harbour

* "Non eadem arboribus pendet vindemia nostris,
Quam Methymnæo carpit de palmite Lesbos." Virg.

† Tournefort, vol. 2. letter 2. p. 61.

is not commodious. The present population of this island is computed to be about 60,000, consisting mostly of Greeks, who seem to enjoy a considerable degree of freedom, the effects of which are visible in their industry. This island is famous for the production of men of extraordinary genius. Ion, the tragic poet, Theopompus, the historian, and Theocritus, the sophist, were natives of Chios. But the greatest honour to which it lays claim, is that of being the birth-place of Homer. The Sciots pretend to shew his school cut in a rock, which few travellers who come to this island neglect to visit. It is well known that seven cities contended for the honour of giving birth to that incomparable poet; and M. Tournefort observes, that when their claims are duly examined, the decision will be in favour of either Scio, or Smyrna, and that Homer must be considered as a native of one of these places.* Opposite to Scio, on the Asiatic shore, is Tschesme, where, in 1770, the Turkish fleet was destroyed by the Russians.

Samos.]—Samos is about thirty miles in length, and ten in breadth. The aspect of this island is rugged: it is full of hills and precipices, and the plain of Cora is the most fertile part; but it has many stagnant waters, which render the air unwholesome. Agriculture, and every kind of industry, appears to be neglected; and Tournefort computes the number of inhabitants at no more than 12,000. They are almost all Greeks, and are governed by a Turkish cadi, and an aga.† The ugliness of the women of Samos forms an unpleasant contrast with the view of female beauty in the other isles

* For a description of Scio, see Dallaway, Chandler, Tournefort, Van Egmont.

† Tournefort, vol. 2, letter 3.

isles of the Archipelago.* The island of Cos is seldom visited by travellers. Its length is about twenty-four miles, and its breadth about three or four. It is almost covered with groves of oranges and lemons, which are the principal articles of its trade.

Rhodes is about thirty-six miles in length, and fifteen in breadth. The soil is somewhat light and sandy, but fertile, producing good crops of corn, particularly of wheat. The city of Rhodes, which is situated at the northern extremity of the island, was anciently noted for a colossal statue of Apollo, in bronze, of seventy cubits in height. It was thrown down by an earthquake, and had lain on the ground for the space of eight centuries, when the fragments were sold by the Saracens, who had made themselves masters of the island.† The present population of Rhodes is computed at about 30,000. This island has been celebrated both in ancient and modern times, and was generally involved in all the wars between the Greeks and the Persians. During the space of two centuries, Rhodes was possessed by the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who from thence were styled knights of Rhodes. In 1523 it was taken by the Turks, and the emperor, Charles V. assigned the island of Malta to the knights, in compensation for their loss.

Tenedos, as already observed, is remarkable only for being the rendezvous of the Grecian fleet, in the Trojan war. It is about eighteen miles in circumference, nearly of a circular form, except a small elongation to the south-east, and about six miles from the nearest shores of Asia, but somewhat above

* See a long description of Samos in Tournefort, vol. 2. letter 3.

† Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 9. p. 425,

 twelve

twelve from the Sygean promontory. Virgil represents it as a flourishing island, and within sight of Troy.* At present, however, it contains no relics of ancient grandeur, and is chiefly remarkable for the excellence of its muscadel wines, which are esteemed the best in the Levant.

* " Est in conspectu Tenedos notissima fama,
Insula dives opum Priami dum regna manebant. *Virgil's Æneid.*

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Historical View—General Progress of Society—Of Arts and Sciences—Literature and Commerce.

THE history of every nation may be traced back to a period in which all research is lost in impenetrable obscurity. We readily discover the formation of powerful states and extensive empires, but we cannot trace the ramifications of ancient tribes, and those numerous migrations, by which the human race was diffused over the remotest parts of the terraqueous globe. The countries now under consideration were the theatre of the first transactions of men, and their history carries us back to the origin of human existence. Amidst the gloom of obscurity in which we are left by profane historians, concerning the primitive state of mankind, the sacred annals of the Hebrew nation afford an illuminating ray, and constitute a singular phænomenon in literature, as well as a source of religious instruction. All the literary monuments of the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Persians, and other nations of antiquity, have long since perished; but by a singular dispensation of Providence, those of the Hebrews remain, and throw a gleam of light into the obscure recesses of the primæval ages, which were impervious to Grecian curiosity. The historians of

Greece, bewildering themselves in the labyrinth of obscure investigation, have had recourse to vague, and often absurd conjecture. The Hebrew history alone furnishes a rational, and, if accurately examined and well understood, a philosophical account of the creation of the world, the grand epoch from which the history of mankind dates its commencement, and exhibibits the original ramifications of the human race, while the poets and philosophers of Greece have fabricated their absurd cosmogonies, and her historians have amused posterity with a mass of fictitious narrative and monstrous representation.

Of the whole space of time which elapsed from the creation to the deluge, we have not the least shadow of historical record, except the outlines given in the first chapters of the book of Genesis. From these, however, it appears, that the first men made a rapid progress in the useful, and even in some of the elegant arts. The earth not only was cultivated, but its bowels were explored; mines were opened, and iron and other metals brought into use. Musical instruments were invented,* a circumstance which indicates a considerable advancement in the arts of luxury. If we might indulge a probable conjecture, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the antediluvians might surpass their successors in ingenuity and vigor of mind, as well as in corporeal strength and longevity. If the deluge was universal, there is no difficulty in supposing that the humidity of the earth in consequence of its submersion, with the noxious exhalations arising from its surface, many parts of which must have long remained covered with stagnant waters, to have been the physical cause, which, by con-

* Genesis, ch. 1. ver. 21, 22.

taminating

taminating the atmosphere, debilitated the constitution, abridged the lives, and probably enfeebled the mental faculties of the succeeding race of mankind. It is reasonable to conclude that so great a physical revolution on the surface of the globe, could not fail of producing great changes in the whole system of animal nature. In this point of view the mosaical account is strictly philosophical.

The few individuals who had escaped the general destruction, retaining the knowledge which they had previously acquired, would naturally communicate it to their descendants; and as agriculture is, of all the sciences, the most necessary, it appears to have been the first that occupied the attention, and exercised the industry of the postdiluvians. Noah himself planted a vineyard, and made wine,* an art with which he had, without doubt, been previously acquainted.

In a general survey of human affairs, it cannot be amiss to take a retrospective view of the progress of society and civilization from the earliest times of historical record. During a long succession of ages, the history of mankind, so far as it has come to our knowledge, is confined within contracted limits. The eastern and southern parts of the Turkish empire comprised between the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Nile, appears to us to have been long the grand theatre of human actions, as well as science, religion, and laws. All the knowledge of remote antiquity that has descended to the modern world, is concentrated in the history of Egypt, Palestine, and Assyria. Of the state of other parts of the world, curiosity can gain little information. Before the foundation of the Persian monarchy, the Greeks had scarcely emerged from bar-

* Genesis, ch. 9.

barism. The Romans were yet unknown, and Rome was only just come into existence. Europe, which now displays her splendid scenery, her magnificent cities, and her polished society, was covered with impervious forests and impassable morasses, her regions unknown, and her inhabitants barbarians. All, therefore, that we know of the history of mankind during this primitive period, is comprehended in one point of view. By some it has been supposed that Noah, the father of the postdiluvian world, as soon as his posterity began to increase, established a colony in the east, from which the oriental nations of Asia derived their origin; and that he sent others of his descendants to repeople those parts of the earth, which he recollected to have been cultivated before the flood.* It would be in vain to attempt to investigate this hypothesis. We could neither ascertain its truth, nor detect its fallacy. The learned could never yet agree concerning the identification of the mountain called in scripture Ararat, where the ark is said to have rested. While some suppose it to be one of the mountains of Armenia; others chuse rather to place it among the high ridges on the confines of India and Thibet. The central point, therefore, of postdiluvian population, from which the various tribes of mankind dispersed themselves into every quarter of the globe, cannot be ascertained. It is reasonable, however, to conclude, that the first postdiluvians would endeavour to fix their habitations in such parts as had already been peopled and cultivated, and might consequently be the sooner restored to their former fertility. Assyria, of which Chaldea is here considered as a part, appears to have been the country in which, after the deluge,

* Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World.

a poli-

a political community was first established. Some reasons might, however, incline us to assign to the Egyptian government, a higher antiquity. But whether Egypt or Assyria was the first seat of civil and political institutions, the former seems to have made a more rapid progress in the improvements of legislature and the arts of civilization. Our information relative to the foundation of the Assyrian monarchy, is more distinct than any that we possess concerning the origin of government in Egypt, although its light soon leaves us to grope our way in obscurity. Nimrod appears to have been one of those conspicuous individuals, who in different ages have distinguished themselves by their personal strength and courage, qualities at that time peculiarly requisite. In the first ages after the flood, the most vigorous efforts of the human species would be necessary to repair the desolation caused by that tremendous event. Among other inconveniences, the earth would soon be overrun with wild beasts, and their destruction would not only afford the most obvious means of exhibiting proofs of courage and dexterity, but would also be regarded as the most essential service that could be rendered to the public. It seems, indeed, that a traditionary account of this state of things gave rise to the Grecian fables concerning Hercules, and others, who acquired immortal fame, and were raised to the rank of gods, by their services to men, in clearing the earth of monsters.* Nimrod appears by his exertions in this respect, to have acquired popularity and fame. It is probable that for this reason he was distinguished by the name of a " mighty hunter before

* All ancient writers agree, that personal strength and courage were, in the primitive ages, esteemed the greatest qualifications.

the Lord,"* an expression which has induced some commentators to imagine that he was an impious and tyrannical oppressor. No semblance of reason, however, nor any acknowledged rules of interpretation, authorise such an opinion. He seems, on the contrary, to have rather been a benefactor of mankind, one of the first who induced men to unite in civil society, and assisted them in asserting their sovereignty over the brute creation. It is probable that his courage and activity in clearing the country of wild beasts, had excited both admiration and gratitude, and procured him so great an ascendancy over men as to enable him to found the city of Babylon, and to establish the first monarchy of which history commemorates the origin.† This vast capital, which, in after ages, acquired so great a celebrity, was situated almost in the middle of that extensive well-watered and fertile plain, which is inclosed by the different branches of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Nimrod also built Accah, Calnets, and Nineveh, on different branches of the same rivers, and thus established a well-connected settlement, of which the different stations had an easy communication, affording the means of mutual support and assistance.

The reasons which determined these primæval settlers in the choice of a situation, are obvious. Agriculture was, undoubtedly, one of the first pursuits that called the industry of man into exertion: it was indispensably necessary to the support of their existence. They would consequently chuse a situation, where the fertility of the soil might promise to reward their labour with a plentiful produce; and where the

* Genesis, ch. 10. † Genesis, ch. 10. v. 10.

large

large rivers and numerous rivulets might ensure them a constant supply of water, an element so essential to the support of all vegetable and animal life.* It is, therefore, no wonder, that in a hot climate, and in the vicinity of sterile and sandy deserts, a fertile plain like the country of Chaldea, environed and traversed by the various branches of large rivers, and copiously irrigated with a number of inferior streams running in every direction, should early attract the notice of men.† Amidst so many advantages, their success could scarcely fail of corresponding with well-grounded expectation. Their fields yielded the most luxuriant harvests, the country became populous, and its capital large and magnificent.

Soon after the settlement of Nimrod in Babylon, Assur laid the foundations of Nineveh.‡ This city was about 300 miles almost due north from Babylon, and situated in a country of which the general aspect greatly resembled that of Chaldea. The inhabitants of a region so abundant in all the necessaries of life, multiplied with rapidity, and their wealth was in proportion augmented. Here was founded the first great empire formed among men, of which Nineveh was a long time the capital, and the centre of its power.

The two monarchies of Babylon and Nineveh, appear to have been sometimes united, and sometimes separated. On these subjects, however, our information is very defective. All the public archives, and other literary monuments of these ancient nations, have long ago perished; and it is from occasional

* Sir Isaac Newton's Chronol. of ancient kingdoms, p. 160.

† For the astonishing fertility of Assyria and Chaldea, see Strabo. lib. 16. Herodot. lib. 1, cap. 193.

‡ Genesis, ch. 10, v. 11.

notices

notices in the Hebrew writings, and the incongruous accounts of the Greeks, that we derive any knowledge of their history, or even of their existence. Ninus is said to have subdued Babylon, and added Media and Armenia to the Assyrian empire.* He is represented as the first prince who made the science of politics subservient to the spirit of conquest. We are also informed that Semiramis, his widow, having assumed the sovereign authority during the minority of her son Ninyas, swayed the sceptre during the space of about forty years, and raised the monarchy to the acmé of its greatness.† In relating the transactions of those remote times, the Grecian writers seem lost in the labyrinth of discordant history. The particulars of the Indian expedition of this princess, and her other exploits, rest chiefly on the authority of Ctesias, whose fabulous tales are adopted by Diod. Siculus, and others, but are too extravagant to come within the limits of historical credibility. Ninyas, the son and successor of Semiramis, is represented as exhibiting a contrast to his warlike and imperious mother. Mild, pacific, and certainly not less prudent, he employed himself in framing regulations for the government of his empire, and the security of his throne; and directed his views to the conservation, rather than the extension of those dominions which his parents had, by their enterprising spirit, acquired.‡

Historians often lead their readers astray by misrepresentation of characters. Ninyas, as well as all his successors, are by the Greeks represented as effeminate and indolent princes. That conduct, however, which they stigmatise with the name of indo-

* Diod. Sicul. lib. 2, on the authority of Ctesias.

† Diod. Sicul. lib. 2.

‡ Ibid. Justin lib. 1, cap. 2.

lence,

lence, ought, perhaps, rather to be dignified with the title of wisdom. Ninyas is said to have first introduced the custom, which afterwards continued among the Assyrian monarchs, of rendering their persons more venerable by rarely exposing themselves to the public eye. In consequence of this majestic seclusion, the people were impressed with a notion that their kings were something superior to the rest of human beings; and this method of inspiring respect has been adopted by several of the Asiatic monarchs of after times. This monarch is said to have levied a numerous militia, which was annually mustered and reviewed in the neighbourhood of the metropolis. This military force was every year disbanded, and its place supplied by a similar levy. This institution answered all the purposes of national defence, and the frequent changes of the commanders, as well as of the soldiers, rendered it difficult to attempt any thing against the sovereign authority. The judges and governors of provinces, were also obliged to repair once every year to Nineveh, in order to render a strict account of their administration.* Such are the outlines which the scattered fragments of history have transmitted to us of this ancient government; such were the methods by which the Assyrian monarchs preserved the tranquillity of their empire, and the stability of their throne. This plan of government instituted by Ninyas, being invariably adhered to by his successors, the empire of the Assyrians remained undismembered for the space of 500 years, according to the chronology of Herodotus; but Diodorus, Sicul. and Justin, assign to it a much longer duration. The Greek writers, however, unanimously agree in

* Diod. Secul. lib. 2.

 stigmatizing

stigmatizing all its sovereigns with the imputation of consummate indolence, lasciviousness, and effeminacy. But these charges, thus echoed from historian to historian, are probably ill grounded; for as a late writer judiciously observes, the Assyrian empire could scarcely have subsisted peaceable, powerful, and united, during so great a length of time, if the sceptre had always been swayed by such unable hands.* But peaceable sovereigns furnish few themes for the historian; and the decided contempt which the Greeks so uniformly express for the monarchs of Assyria, may with great appearance of reason be ascribed to the tranquillity with which they reigned. This pacific system of government, seems also to have been the result of the wise regulations instituted by Ninyas, who in the secret recesses of his palace, moved all the wheels of the political machine, and was by the people, who felt the effects of the unseen impulse, venerated as a deity. There is, however, no difficulty in supposing that a long series of prosperity might produce effeminacy in a despotic and luxurious court; and the conduct of Sardanapulon, as well as of some others of the later sovereigns, might in all probability justify the imputation fixed on them by the Greek historians.

After this ancient empire had, during the long period of more than five centuries, according to the least computation, subsisted in a state of tranquillity, of which few instances are found in the history of nations, it was at last rent asunder. The Medes and the Babylonians revolted, and having taken Nineveh, Sardanapulus, the reigning king, setting fire to his palace, consumed himself, his family, and his treasures, in

* Presid. Gognet Orig. des loix par. 2, liv. 1, ch. 1.

the conflagration, in order to avoid falling into the hands of the rebels. This revolution happened about A.A.C. 747. The Medes established a republican government,* and Babylon became an independent kingdom under Nabonassar, who had been its governor and headed its revolt.† The republican liberty of the Medes, degenerated into licentiousness; and in order to remedy the evil, the national assembly was convened; and having learned from experience how slender a partition separated republicanism from anarchy, they unanimously elected Dejoces, an able magistrate and statesman, for their king.

This skilful politician being perfectly acquainted with the turbulent disposition of the nation which he had undertaken to govern, immediately began to provide for the security of his person, and the perpetuity of his power. In this view he built the city of Ecbatana, and made it the capital of Media. This city has often been described, and its magnificence apparently exaggerated, although it was undoubtedly one of the largest and most splendid of the ancient world, and scarcely surpassed by any except Babylon, Memphis, Thebes, and perhaps Nineveh; but of this last no ancient writer has left us a description. Herodotus, who had seen Ecbatana, says that it was nearly of the same extent as Athens, situated on the declivity of a hill, of a circular form, and encompassed with seven walls, having the royal palace inclosed within the innermost circle.‡ Polybius, who viewed it three centuries after Herodotus, when it was greatly

* Herod. lib. 1, cap. 96.

† Ptolemy Cam. Astronom. This called the æra of Nabonassar, is the first chronological period that is fixed in profane history.

‡ Herod. lib. 1.

declined

declined from its ancient splendor, says "Ecbatana is situated in the northern part of Media. It was in ancient times the royal residence, and seems to have surpassed in magnificence all other cities. It is built on the declivity of the mountain Orontes, and not inclosed with walls, but there is in it a citadel of extraordinary strength.*" This citadel was probably the palace of Dejoces, where, adhering to the plan adopted by the kings of Assyria, he lived inaccessible and almost invisible, none but confidential ministers being admitted into his presence. In the innermost recesses of his surrounding walls, encompassed with battlements, and protected by guards, Dejoces held with a steady hand the reins of empire, and transmitted the sceptre to his descendants.

The empire of the Assyrians, although dismembered, was far from being subverted. Nineveh, although captured by the insurgents, soon regained its independence, and became the seat of a separate and still powerful monarchy. Its tranquillity, however, was destroyed, and it was frequently involved in wars with the Medes and the Babylonians, who, instead of subjects, were now become rivals and enemies. In one of those wars, Phraortes, king of the Medes, after having subdued most of the neighbouring nations, perished in an expedition against Nineveh.† It seems, however, that the Assyrian monarchs, now harrassed by reiterated attacks from those countries which had formerly constituted a valuable part of their empire, found themselves obliged to adopt a belligerent system of politics, and to seek an indem-

* Polyb. lib. 10. Perhaps the outer walls had been demolished before his time.

† Herod. lib. 1, ch. 102.

nification

nification for their losses, in the conquest of the weaker neighbouring states. This appears from the subjugation of the kingdom of Israel by Salmanezar, and the well known attack made by Sennacherib on Judah.* After the disaster of Phraortes, Cyaxeres, his son and successor, assembled a numerous army, invaded Assyria, and invested the metropolis,† but was obliged to abandon the siege, and return to the defence of his own dominions against the Scythians, who in his reign made that great irruption into the south of Asia, which, although obscurely related, constitutes a prominent feature in the history of those remote ages. This is the first occasion on which these inhabitants of the northern regions, whose numerous and hardy tribes issuing out of their immense deserts, have at different periods subjugated the southern parts of Europe and Asia, are mentioned in the annals of the world. Their manner of life and of warfare, appear to have been nearly the same in all ages,‡ until their connection with civilized nations instructed them in new modes of discipline. These barbarians broke the power of the victorious Medes, and over-ran a great part of what might then be denominated the civilized world. During a calamitous period of twenty-eight years, those regions exhibited a melancholy spectacle. The open country was every where exposed to pillage, and strongly fortified cities could alone resist the attacks of the invaders. The history of those times is extremely obscure, but it is generally understood that Esarhaddon, son and successor of

* 2 Kings, ch. 18 and 19. † Herod. lib. 1, ch. 103.

‡ Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Empire, ch. 26—34. It appears that these northern barbarians never reached Judea, as the Jewish annals are silent on the subject.

Sennacherib,

Sennacherib,* had re-united Babylon to the ancient Assyrian empire, about A.A.C. 680, which was sixty-seven years after its revolt.† In this time of general consternation in consequence of the Scythian irruption, while Assyria had sufficient employment in guarding her frontiers against the common enemy, Babylon revolted a second time under the conduct of Nabopolasser, father of the celebrated Nebuchadnezzar; and that rebel chief established a monarchy, which in the reign of his son obliterated the glory of the Assyrian name.

The power of the Scythians was at length broken by the superior discipline of the Medes. Great numbers of these marauders had perished in their expedition, part of those that remained returned to their native wilds, and part of them perhaps incorporating themselves with the people of the countries which they had overrun, that dreadful political convulsion, which had so long and so violently agitated Asia, at length subsided. It has been the opinion of some judicious historians, that numbers of these military adventurers entered into the service of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a supposition which the sudden aggrandizement of his power, and the circumstances render probable. The prophets of Judah represent that conqueror as numbering in his armies the nations of the north, a description which could not be appropriated to the Chaldeans, considered with respect to Jerusalem, from which their country was in almost a due easterly position. Cyaxares had no sooner gotten rid of these Scythian invaders, than in conjunction with

* Esarhadden is mentioned as the successor of Sennacherib. 2 Kings, ch. 19, v. 37.

† Ptolemy Cam. Astronom.

Nebuchadnezzar,

Nebuchadnezzar, he again entered Assyria.* The particulars of this important expedition are no where related, but the issue is well known to have been the final subversion of that ancient empire. This was one of the greatest political revolutions that had hitherto taken place in the world. The prophet Nahum furnishes some general hints of the grandeur of Nineveh, and gives a sublime and picturesque description of its calamitous downfal. But it is impossible to form any commensurate idea of this ancient and celebrated city, the metropolis of the first empire established among men. It was laid in ruins before the Greeks had made any considerable progress in literature, commerce, or geographical knowledge, and before they had any acquaintance with the countries watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates. Diodorus Siculus, indeed, attempts to make Nineveh the subject of an imperfect description, and says, that its walls were 100 feet high, and of an amazing strength, being so thick as to admit the driving of three carriages abreast, and that they were flanked with towers 200 feet high; but he does not tell us from whence he received this information.†

Of the history of the two kingdoms of Media and Babylon very little is known. Nebuchadnezzar, indeed, by his conquest of Judea, obtained for his name and nation a lasting celebrity in the Jewish annals. This prince, by the conquest of all Syria, and of Tyre and Egypt, as well as of Judea, exceedingly aggrandized his power, extended and enriched his empire, after-

* According to Anderson it was Nabopolassar, sometimes called Nebuchadnezzar the First, who joined with Cyaxeres in the destruction of Nineveh. Royal Geneal. Tab. vol. 19, p. 63.

† Diod. Sicul. lib. 2.

 wards

wards turned his attention to the embellishment of his capital, by all the means which despotic power and immense resources could afford, or all the ingenuity and skill of that age could devise. To this monarch is ascribed the construction of the celebrated walls of Babylon, the royal palace, and the stupendous temple of Belus. It is, indeed, generally supposed, with great appearance of probability, that Nebuchadnezzar caused the whole city to be rebuilt, on that magnificent plan, which excited the admiration of the ancient world. Most historians agree, that this monarch reigned about forty-three years, and that the Babylonian monarchy did not exist above thirty-four after his decease. Four kings are said to have reigned after Nebuchadnezzar, of whom Belshazzar, the last, supposed to have been his grandson, has seventeen years assigned to the length of his reign. The confusion of names and an uncertain chronology, renders this portion of history extremely perplexed, and the reigns of those princes indistinct; but their actions seem to have little claim to commemoration.

All that we know, with any appearance of certainty, concerning the fall of this proud metropolis of the east, may be detailed in a short narrative. Evil-Merodach, son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, appears to have first given rise, by an unprovoked attack on the Medes, to that irreconcileable enmity, which they afterwards entertained against Babylon. The Babylonians, however, were repulsed with great slaughter by Cyaxeres, king of the Medes, and his grandson, Cyrus, who first distinguished himself on that occasion. Evil-Merodach having been murdered by conspirators, Neriglisser, one of the number, usurped the throne, and being jealous of the growing power of the Medes,

Medes, excited against them a general confederacy of the neighbouring nations.* Cyaxeres conferred the command of his army on Cyrus. The Babylonians took the field under Neriglisser, their king, and Crœsus, king of Lydia, the most powerful prince of Asia Minor. The kings of Phrygia and Cappadocia also brought considerable forces to the aid of the Babylonians. Xenophon makes the Phrygians amount to 40,000, and the Cappadocians to 36,000, an estimate which affords us a view of the state of Asia Minor at that early period, and shews it to have been divided into several distinct monarchies of considerable wealth and power, although, perhaps, in some degree dependent on the potent and opulent kingdom of Lydia. The king of Armenia, on the other hand, joined the Medes, while the Arabians aided the Babylonians. Thus all the surrounding nations were involved in the contest between Media and Babylon.

In this war the Babylonians were constantly unsuccessful. Their armies were defeated, and their king slain in battle. His son was a monster of wickedness. After a reign of less than a year he fell by a conspiracy; and Nabonadius, whom Herodotus calls Labinitus, and Josephus Naboandal ascended the throne. This prince, supposed to be the Belshazzar mentioned in the Book of Daniel, wholly addicted himself to indolence and effeminacy, although a ruinous war was desolating his kingdom and menacing his capital. The administration of public affairs was left entirely to Nitocris, his mother, a woman of extraordinary abilities, who, while her degenerate son was immersed in effeminate plea-

* Xenophon's Cyropœdia, lib. 1. For the generally received chronology of the Assyrian, Median, and Babylonian kings, see Anderson's Royal Geneal. Tables, vol, 19, p. 22 and 26.

 sures,

sures, did all that human prudence could devise in order to support the sinking empire. She completed many works which Nebuchadnezzar had begun, raised strong fortifications on the banks of the Euphrates, and made a wonderful subterraneous passage under the bottom of that river from the old to the new palace.

The Medes and Persians being every where victorious, Cyrus turned his arms against the potent kingdom of Lydia, of which he soon completed the conquest, and having made himself master of Sardis, its rich and splendid capital, took prisoner its celebrated king, Crœsus, the great ally of the Babylonians. By a continued series of successes he also reduced all the countries that were in the Babylonian interest, from the Egean and Levant Seas to the Euphrates; and after the war had continued above eighteen years, he entered Chaldea and advanced towards Babylon. The king being informed of the approach of Cyrus, marched out to give him battle, but being easily routed, he retreated into the city, which the enemy immediately besieged. The prodigious height and strength of the walls, environed by proportionable ditches, and impregnable to every mode of attack then known, the numerous troops employed in their defence, immense magazines of provisions sufficient for the consumption of many years, with the great extent and fertility of the garden and arable land within the vast circuit of the city, capable of furnishing continual supplies, all concurred to render the siege of Babylon an arduous enterprise. This extraordinary combination of difficulties did not discourage Cyrus, nor did length of time overcome his perseverance. Despairing of taking the city by assault, he converted the siege into a blockade,

and caused a line of circumvallation to be drawn quite round its immense circuit, in order to cut off all communication with the country. The Babylonians in the mean while, confiding in the strength of their walls, the breadth and depth of the surrounding ditches, their vast magazines and fertile gardens, considered the attempt of Cyrus as impracticable, and resigned themselves to a fatal security.

Cyrus having spent two whole years before Babylon, without seeing any prospect of accomplishing his design, devised at last a bold and singular stratagem, which answered his most sanguine expectation. A vast lake, begun by Nebuchadnezzar aad finished by Nicotris, the dowager-queen, had been dug for the purpose of carrying off the redundant waters of the Euphrates, which, descending sometimes in great floods from the mountains of Media and Armenia, used to inundate the flat country of Chaldea, and even several parts of the metropolis. Cyrus being informed that a great annual festival was about to be kept in Babylon, and that the inhabitants were accustomed to spend the whole night in drunkenness and debauchery, thought this a favorable opportunity of surprising the place. He accordingly sent a strong detachment to the head of the great canal of communication between the lake and the river, with orders, at an appointed hour, to break down the bank, and turn the whole current into that vast reservoir. At the same time, he stationed one body of troops near the place where the Euphrates entered the city, and another at its egress, ordering them to march in by the bed of the river, which is somewhat wider than the Thames at London, being about two stadia or furlongs in breadth. The same evening he caused the head of his

 trenches,

trenches, on both sides the river, to be cut, in order to accelerate the discharge of the waters, so that by means of those different outlets the channel was quickly dried. The two bodies of troops being conducted by Babylonian deserters, entered by the bed of the Euphrates, and finding the brazen gates at the ends of the streets, abutting on the banks, left open by reason of the general disorder which prevailed in that riotous night, they penetrated into the heart of the city. According to the concerted plan of operation, they met at the royal palace, where the king was giving a grand and licentious entertainment to a thousand of his nobles.* Admitting the extent given to Babylon by Herodotus, each of these parties had seven miles and a half, or, according to the measures of Diodorus Siculus, six miles to march from their entrance into the city, before they reached the royal palace, which stood in the centre. The supposition, therefore, of some writers, that the enemy had already entered when the handwriting appeared on the wall, is extremely probable. The effects of drunkenness strengthening the incredulity, or deranging the reason of the king and his attendants, may naturally account for the little regard which they paid to Daniel's denunciations, and their neglect of taking any measures for their own safety. The assailants, having surprised and cut in pieces the guards, rushed into the palace, and put the king and his dissolute courtiers to the sword. The people being apprised of the event, immediately submitted, and the conquest was completed without further opposition. Such is the account left us by Herodotus and Xenophon, of one of the most interesting events of antiquity, the subjugation of Babylon, the domineer-

* Daniel, ch. 5, v. 1.

ing seat of the eastern empire, celebrated in profane and sacred history; a city which Divine Providence had aggrandized, and used as an instrument of wrath for the punishment of the Jews and other wicked nations, and of which the downfal was so often predicted by the prophets of Israel in the boldest strains of Oriental eloquence.*

History affords no authentic information relative to the government and laws of the Assyrians and Babylonians, except the account which the Greek writers have given of the regulations of Nynias. But how long these were maintained, and what system was adopted after Babylon became the seat of empire, are matters of equal uncertainty. The long space of more than eleven centuries, which elapsed between the reign of Nynias and that of Sardanapulus, presents a vast chasm in the Assyrian annals; and the sequel, until the destruction of Nineveh, is little more than a chaos. The history of the Babylonian monarchy, except in what relates to its consolidation and aggrandizement under Nebuchadnezzar, and its final subversion by Cyrus, is scarcely less obscure. It affords no direct and authentic information relative to the system of government and civil polity. From such superficial documents, however, as may be collected from various fragments and from collateral circumstances, the monarchy of the Assyrians and Babylonians appears to have been always despotic. Sacerdotal domination,

* Mr. Rennell has employed a whole section in a critical enquiry concerning Babylon, in which he calculates the area at 72 square British miles, and the probable number of inhabitants at something more than 1,200,000, which seems too high a computation: he fixes the height of the temple of Belus at 500 feet. Geog. of Herodot. sect. 14. D'Anville computes the area of Babylon at thirty-six miles. L'Euph. and Le Tig. p. 113.

which constituted the essence of the Egyptian government, is also a distinguishable, although a less prominent feature in that of Babylon. In Egypt the priesthood was the principal, or rather the only fountain of power; in Babylon the military interest seems to have been preponderant. The power of the Babylonian priests, over both princes and people, was exceedingly great; but the facts related in the Book of Daniel and in some of the apocryphal writings, as well as several passages of Josephus and other profane historians, lead us to believe that their authority was supported rather by the influence of astrology and other modes of divination, in virtue of which they assumed the venerable character of expositors of the will of the gods than by any constitutional privilege. The kings of Babylon appear to have regarded the priests rather as counsellors and directors than as dictators.

In the history of the human mind, as well as of human circumstances, religion constitutes a principal feature; and it is among these primitive nations, that we must look for the origin of those various forms under which it has at different periods appeared. Man received at his creation all the knowledge that was suitable to this present state of existence. This primitive knowledge was soon obscured, and almost obliterated, through the operation of sensual passions and a constant attention to physical wants. The pure worship of one supreme and universal Being, transmitted from Noah to his posterity, remained uncorrupted only in the family of Abraham, while among all the rest of mankind religion began to assume a thousand fantastic forms, produced by the vagaries of imagination, agitated by joy or grief, hope or fear,

and

and modified by a variety of fortuitous circumstances.* The religion of the Chaldeans was Zabaism, or the worship of the heavenly bodies, which is generally supposed to have originated at Babylon, and to have been from thence communicated to the greatest part of the globe. In Zabaism may be discovered the origin of Polytheism and of every kind of idolatry.† All the various forms which Paganism assumed, were only so many different shoots from their original stem. The legislators of antiquity adapted their institutions to the state of the different nations which they had to rule; and from the variety of human circumstances, and the various stages of intellectual improvement, the different systems of religion, as well as of government, took their colouring.

To the original worship of one eternal and universal Being, the Chaldeans added the secondary adoration of the celestial orbs, which they regarded as his ministers, and invoked as mediators.‡ They considered these glorious luminaries as the habitations of subordinate divinities, through whose agency they supposed them to be moved and the whole universe governed.§ To these they erected temples and offered sacrifices. They instituted festivals to their honour, and studied to conciliate their favour or to avert their displeasure. Their rites were gradually multiplied, and their worship became more sensual. Symbolical figures were invented, representing, in an allegorical manner, the supposed powers and properties of these subaltern deities, and the attributes of the Supreme Essence.

* Warburton's Divine Leg. book 3, sect. 6.

† Owen de Ortu Idolatriæ, lib. 3, cap. 4.

‡ Prideaux Connect. par 1, book 3.

§ Diod. Sicul. lib. 2.

Images

Images were of all symbols the most suitable to the conceptions of the multitude. To these the people transferred that homage which they had been taught to offer to the objects thus represented. They were consecrated with the most pompous solemnity, and incense was burnt before them. They were honoured with sacrifices, and the superstitious vulgar were brought to imagine that the gods themselves condescended to inhabit these material representations. Zabaism, however, in its most corrupted state, was not, any more than the other systems of Paganism,* incompatible with the belief of one Supreme Being, which was always the fundamental article of the Chaldean religion. Whether the Babylonians believed the eternity of the world as a necessary emanation of the Deity, or its creation at some particular period, by an arbitrary act of his will, is not satisfactorily ascertained.† But it is well known that the existence of a future state, was an uncontested article of their creed. The priests of Babylon, however, converted religion into an engine of power and policy. Zabaism, aided by astronomical observations, produced astrology, a scheme admirably calculated for acquiring dominion over the minds of men. By arrogating to themselves the power of investigating the sacred counsels of heaven, the priests of Babylon maintained their influence over superstitious princes and an ignorant people.

Of the commerce of these nations, no distinct information can be obtained, as history is silent on the subject. The situation of Assyria and Chaldea, which, by means of the Tigris and the Euphrates, had an easy communication with the Persian Gulph, was favorable

* Prideaux, ubi supra.—Cudworth's Intellectual System, ch. 4, sect. 13.
† On the subject see Cudworth's Intellectual System, ch. 4.

to an intercourse with the Oriental countries. The splendor and luxury which reigned in Babylon required a variety of supplies; but history is silent in regard to the channels by which they were introduced. As nothing can with certainty be discovered relative to this subject, the most probable conjecture is, that the greatest part of the foreign commodities used in Babylon, were furnished by the commerce of Tyre; for the Tyrian merchants would scarcely leave unnoticed so ample a market, so nearly in the route of their eastern trade.*

In regard to the manners, customs, and other national characteristics of the Assyrians and Babylonians, no documents exist that can afford us any direct information. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, they were a warlike people; but after the death of that monarch, their military genius appears to have been extinguished by the unenterprising effeminacy of his successors. Of their literature no monuments exist; but the Greeks have given us some information relative to their scientific attainments, which consisted chiefly in some knowledge of astronomy. In this they seem to have been equal to the Egyptians, and like them had discovered the length of the year and the method of calculating eclipses.† Like them, they had also made some progress in physiological studies; and some of the first philosophers of Greece travelled into Chaldea as well as into Egypt, and sought instruction from the priests of Babylon, as well as from those of Memphis. In regard to their architecture, those stu-

* M. Rennell, however, thinks that the Tyrians had no trade with India, Geog. of Herodotus, p. 248. More will be said on this subject under the article of India.

† Herodot. lib. 2, cap. 109.—Diod. Sicul. lib. 2.

pendous

pendous erections described by Grecian writers, seem to have owed their fame for magnificence rather to bulk than to elegance or symmetry. The Babylonians appear to have thought that greatness of design could be displayed only by immensity of fabric; and their taste seems, on the whole, to have been strongly tinctured with that pompous ostentation, which has ever been the characteristic of Asiatic grandeur. Of their statuary and painting we have no accurate accounts. Their idolatrous system of religion, however, encouraged and even required the exercise of those arts; and the sacred history, in describing the colossal statue erected by Nebuchadnezzar, afford a proof that they were not unknown. The circumstance here alluded to also shews, that among their other pursuits, music was not neglected.* But it seems, that in Chaldea as well as in Egypt agriculture, which the fertility of their soil encouraged and rewarded, was the science that was carried to the greatest perfection.†

After examining the ancient state of the countries which constitute the uttermost part of the Ottoman empire on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and tracing the dim outlines of their history, it is requisite to glance on those that are situated between the latter river and the Levant or Mediterranean Sea. This tract of country, yet known by its ancient appellation of Syria, constituted another of the conspicuous theatres of action, on which were developed some of the most interesting events in the history of the human species. Here we have a distinct view of the patriarchal mode of life as it existed in the primeval

* Daniel, chap. 3.

† For the agriculture, drainage, &c. of Assyria and Chaldea, see Strabo, lib. 16. p. 740, 742, and Herodot. lib. 1, p. 193.

ages.

ages. The ancient annals of the Hebrew nation trace the origin of that celebrated and singular people to its most distant source. They exhibit the interesting spectacle of a numerous and powerful nation, proceeding from one single family, and experiencing all the variety of political vicissitude, advancing from obscurity to eminence, for sometime by slow gradations, afterwards by more rapid steps. The picture is then reversed: the nation is seen gradually declining, at length totally subjugated by the overwhelming power of Babylon, and on the extinction of that empire, restored to its native seat and ancient possessions. But every one is so well acquainted with the events recorded in this portion of the Jewish history, that even a sketch of its outlines is here unnecessary.*

It may not, however, be amiss, to call the reader's attention to some of those peculiarities which render the Hebrew nation a striking object in the history of the human mind. The most distinguishing characteristic of this remarkable people, was its religious system. Through all the fluctuations of fortune, and all the variety of political revolutions, the Jewish nation uniformly exhibited the singular phœnomenon of a particular people discriminated from all others, by a religion founded on revelation, and consonant to reason, inculcating the most sublime and rational notions of the Supreme Being, as well as the purest principles of morality. Although, through the vicious inclinations of the people, or the particular views of their rulers, their history affords many instances of deviation into idolatry, yet the pure worship of the Creator and Sovereign of the universe, was the basis of their religious ideas, which, although often ob-

* Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Josephus.

scured

scured, were never wholly effaced from the public mind. Those periods of darkness, in which idolatry seemed to reign triumphant, were no more than temporary eclipses of religion, which again burst forth from amidst the gloom. The one Supreme Intelligence was the object of national worship, and his existence the fundamental article of popular belief; while that leading principle was, among all the pagan nations, obscured by a heterogeneous mass of mythological absurdities. Among the Jews, the idea of one eternal and universal Being, the Creator and Governor of the world, was present to the mind of every individual of the multitude, while among the pagans it was known only by the philosophers, and totally concealed* from the people, whose religious notions extended no farther than to the ideal divinities, whose material representations were exhibited in their temples.

The Mosaic system was eminently distinguished from all others in the mode of its promulgation, as well as by the nature of its institutions. Menes, the first king of Egypt, pretended that his laws were delivered to him by the god Hermes. Other legislators imitated his example; and in order to command the respect of the people, called in religion to the aid of their civil institutions. Lycurgus, having consulted the oracle of Apollo, at Delphos, established the Spartan laws under the auspices of the prophetic divinity :† and Numa ascribed his institutions to the goddess Egeria.‡ But Moses was the

* Divine Leg. book 4. sect. 6.—Strabo, lib. 1.—Theologie des Philosophes de l Abbé d'Olivet—Traduçtion Francoise de Cicero Nat. Deorum.

† Diod. Sicul, lib. 1.

‡ Plutarch Vita Lycurgi.—Livy, lib. 1. ch. 21.—Plutarch Vita Numæ.

first,

first, and indeed the only legislator among the ancients, who promulgated a code of laws, in the august name of one God, the creator, preserver, and ruler of the universe. His authority being publicly evidenced by the most tremendous signs of the Divine presence on Mount Sinai, he introduced his civil and religious ordinances in a manner worthy of the source from which they were derived, beginning with an historical account of the creation of the world, the infusion of an intellectual spirit into man, and the origin of physical and moral evil. His laws display consummate wisdom, with the most perfect adaptation to human circumstances. The primary object of those which relate to the worship of the Supreme Being, is to inculcate just notions of his essence and attributes, a species of knowledge, which constitutes the basis of all true religion, of all pure morality, and of all sound philosophy. Those which relate to human society, are admirably calculated for the peace and security of its members. The precepts of the Hebrew legislator are directed to the regulation of thought, as well as of action; and by their prohibition of inordinate desire, they strike at the root of all moral evil. The decalogue comprehends in a few words the elements of jurisprudence, as well as of rational religion; and the consecration of every seventh day to the duties of religion, being an institution excellently calculated for keeping all the others in remembrance, marks the completeness of the system. A theologian might here find an immense field for expatiation: to the eye of philosophy, a view of the Mosaical institution is a grand and interesting subject of contemplation; and the political and religious history of the

Israelites,

Israelites, constitutes a striking feature in that of human affairs.

In the system of Moses, there is, however, one remarkable circumstance, which has given rise to a variety of conjectures among the learned, and cannot be overlooked by the historian who records, or the philosopher who investigates the rise and progress of human ideas. The Hebrew legislator is totally silent on the doctrine of a future state, and seems to exclude it entirely from his system.* As the belief of future rewards and punishments is universally acknowledged to be the strongest stimulus to virtue, and the most powerful check to vice, that can be planted in the human mind, it is no wonder that the omission of so important a doctrine should confound all the reasoning faculties of those who examine the Mosaical institution. The learned Dr. Warburton asserts, that the Jews were totally ignorant of the existence of a future state, until the time of the captivity, when they acquired their first knowledge of it from the Babylonians; and that Moses intentionally concealed from them this important truth.† It appears, however, to have been from time immemorial, known and believed among the Egyptians, and it must be regarded as somewhat extraordinary, that the Israelites did not learn it from them, as well as so many centuries afterwards from the Babylonians.‡ Whatever might have been the case of the people in this respect, it is evident that Moses, who having been educated in the

* Divine Legation of Moses, book 6. sect. 1, 2, 3.

† Id. book 5. sect. 5.

‡ The existence of a future state had ever been the doctrine of the Egyptians. Dr. Warburton's Divine Legation, book 2. sect. 6.

court,

court of Pharaoh, had been instructed by the priest, and was skilled in all their science, could not fail of being perfectly acquainted with this grand dogma of Egyptian religion and philosophy. His exclusion of it from his system, cannot therefore be attributed to ignorance or oversight; and his reasons for neglecting to avail himself of so powerful an engine, constitute a subject which has exercised the conjectural faculties of divines and philosophers, from the days of the Sadducees to those of bishop Warburton. The omission of this important doctrine, therefore, must have proceeded from some particular view of things in the mind of the legislator, in connection with the circumstances of the people. Moses, acting as the conductor and ruler of a nation, destined to preserve the pure worship of the Supreme Being, appears, in his quality of legislator, to have considered the actions of individuals only in connection with the interests of the community; and as this world is the theatre on which national rewards and punishments must be displayed, he proposed to the Israelites none but those of a temporal nature. Considering the matter in this point of view, it is requisite to have a right comprehension of the political ideas of the Israelites. They regarded their state as a Theocracy under the spiritual and temporal government of the Supreme Being. Moses was his temporal vice-regent: the judges, his successors, maintained the same character; and the kings were only the viceroys of God, invested, *pro tempore*, with the ensigns, and performing, by delegation, the functions of royalty. This idea of their political system was inculcated by the residence of the ark of the covenant among them, in which the Shekinah, or Divine presence was, after the promulgation

gation of the law, manifested in the manner described in the book of Leviticus.* Moses, therefore, in the character of temporal vice-regent of the Deity, constituted for the regulation of public worship, and of social order, confined himself to the promise of temporal rewards, and the denunciation of temporal punishments. And it is probable that, without an express commission, he did not think himself authorized to propose those of a future state, which he therefore left to the ultimate award of the cœlestial Sovereign. Subsequent circumstances induce us to suppose, that the reason why Moses did not receive a command to announce the final destiny of man, was, because the full revelation of the doctrine of immortality was reserved as one of the peculiar offices of the Messiah.

General state of society, arts, sciences, &c.]—After taking a view of the political and religious system of the Hebrews, it cannot be uninteresting to bestow a slight investigation on the general state of society, formerly exhibited by that celebrated people, from whom the greatest part of the modern world derives the chief of its metaphysical and moral ideas. In the primitive times, the patriarchal manners universally prevailed. In every country their flocks and herds constituted the riches of the inhabitants; and during many ages the opulence of the Israelites was estimated by that criterion. The sons of David had their farms and their flocks of sheep; and princes did not disdain to superintend the occupations of the pastoral and agricultural life. It was not until the latter part of the reign of that victorious monarch, who, by a series of conquests, had consecrated, within the walls

* Leviticus, ch. 40. ver. 34 and 35.

of Jerusalem, the plundered wealth which commerce had brought into the countries between the Euphrates and the Levant Sea, that urbanity and elegance began to appear in Judah. Solomon having augmented by commerce the wealth which David had acquired by conquest, the Israelitish monarchy, during his splendid and pacific reign, attained to the meridian of its greatness and opulence, and soon after, in consequence of its fatal division in that of his son, began to decline.

The distribution of the territory of Canaan among the people, according to their tribes and families,* and the inalienability of patrimonial possessions,† would naturally keep property nearly on a level, much longer than in most countries with which we are acquainted, and this constitutes a striking feature of Hebrew society. The patrimonial inheritance, as well as the personal estate, being by a positive injunction of the law equally divided among the sons of each family, with the single exception of a double share to the first born, every individual was a possessor of land. In consequence, however, of the progressive increase of population, estates would in process of time be ramified into very small subdivisions. The right of primogeniture assigning a double portion to the eldest, had a constant tendency, although in a slower degree than among us, to produce an unequal distribution of property, and with the unequal increase of families, collateral reversions, the different exertions and successes of individuals, and a variety of other accidental circumstances, would, as in all other countries, contribute gradually to destroy the equality of condition at first established. As the territorial division was limit-

* See Joshua, ch. 13, &c. † Levit. ch. 25, v. 23, &c.

ed to the promised land of Canaan, the countries afterwards conquered were annexed to the royal domain, and were at the king's disposal. These demesnes of the crown, in whatever way they were managed, as well as the administration of other parts of the revenue, with the emoluments arising from public offices, civil and military, afforded to individuals legal means of acquiring wealth and distinction. But in the latter times of the monarchy, a horrible system of accumulation and oppression had introduced itself among the Jews, and powerful individuals set at defiance the authority of the laws, which had provided that the year of jubilee should be a general release from debt and servitude, by the exoneration of all mortgaged estates, and the liberation of all Hebrew slaves.* The opulent Jews found means to elude this salutary law, and either forcibly retained the mortgaged estates, and enslaved persons of their brethren, or after having ostensibly complied with the legal injunctions, found various pretexts for a second seizure. At that time there appears to have existed in Jerusalem a faction of overgrown individuals, who held both the king and the people in slavery.† Neither the power of the monarch, the denunciations of the prophets, nor the authority of the law, could restrain the extortions of the Jewish grandees, until they were at last extinguished in the blood of the greatest part of those lawless oppressors, and the captivity of the rest when the city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. During their residence in Babylon, the Jews continued a distinct people, enjoying various privileges. In the

* Leviticus, ch. 25, v. 8, &c.

† Jeremiah, ch. 34, v. 9, &c. See the whole view of these affairs in the Book of Jeremiah.

space

space of seventy years, they imbibed several of the philosophical opinions of their conquerors; a considerable mixture of Chaldaic was introduced into the Hebrew language, and in all probability the Jews carried back with them some tincture of the Babylonian manners.

During the existence of the monarchy, the Jews had made a considerable progress, not only in the arts of conveniency, but also in those of luxurious refinement. We have no particular description of the city of Jerusalem, nor any distinct account of its extent or population, previous to its destruction by the Babylonians. But the prophet Isaiah minutely describes the extravagant splendour of dress, and luxurious mode of living which prevailed in that city.* Every one has heard of the magnificence of Solomon, and from his time to the fall of the monarchy, both the court and the city appear to have exhibited a degree of splendour, perhaps little inferior to that of their neighbours of Assyria and Babylon. The Jews, however, do not seem to have distinguished themselves in the sciences or liberal arts, nor, except in the reign of Solomon, did they ever pay attention to commercial pursuits.† They had little knowledge of astronomy, the study of which, in connection with astrology, was so greatly in vogue among the Chaldeans and the Egyptians. Statuary and painting were discountenanced by their law; and Jewish architecture, except under Solomon, makes no striking figure in history.

* Isaiah, chap. 3, v. 18, &c.

† Jehoshaphat made an unsuccessful attempt to revive the oriental commerce; but this, as well as the expeditions of Solomon's vessels, seems to have been a royal speculation, in which the subjects had no share. 1 Kings, ch. 22, v. 48.

Solomon himself employed Tyrian artificers in all his great works, and neither before nor after his reign, do we hear of the erection of any magnificent structures. In regard to the buildings, indeed, of this prince, if we calculate their dimensions according to the common cubit so frequently mentioned in the scriptures, we feel ourselves obliged to conclude that, notwithstanding the costliness of the materials, and the elaborate elegance of the workmanship, they exhibit a contemptible littleness, exceedingly different from that immensity of fabric and ponderous solidity which characterized the Egyptian and Babylonian architecture. But the author of a curious work lately published, contends that the length and breadth of the temple of Jerusalem, are given in the great cubit by us denominated the Hebrew fathom, which is equivalent to four of the common cubits. By this calculation, therefore, the dimensions of the temple, instead of delineating a diminutive building of about thirty-six yards long, by twelve wide, and about eighteen and a half high, exhibit a truly magnificent structure, not less than one hundred and forty-five yards, two feet nine inches in length, forty-eight yards and nearly two feet in breadth, and seventy-two yards two feet ten inches in height.* These, as the learned and judicious author remarks, are dimensions that bespeak a magnificence adequate to the intention of the founder expressed in these words, "The house which I build is great, for great is our God above all Gods;" and again, "The house which I build is wonderful great."† This author, indeed, with much good sense,

* Rev. Mr. Gabb's Trinis Pyramidis, or disquisitions on the first standard of linear measure, p. 117.

† 2 Chron. chap. 2.

ridicules

ridicules the supposition that the queen of Sheba should be astonished at the magnificence of a building only 36 yards long, and 12 wide, or that 80,000 woodmen should be employed in cutting down timber, and 70,000 labourers in carrying materials, with 80,000 stone masons, and 3600 officers to superintend the work; and that all this numerous band of workmen and superintendents should be occupied seven years in completing a building, of which the dimensions were no more than sufficient for a saloon in a nobleman's palace.* It seems highly probable that the ingenious author, Mr. Gabb, has cleared up a difficult point, and ascertained the just dimensions of one of the most celebrated structures of the ancient world. At least it must be acknowledged, that he has sufficiently detected an almost general error, to excite a further enquiry. In either case, he has rendered an essential service to ancient history. If the common estimate of the cubit here used be not grossly erroneous, the temple of Jerusalem, that superb monument of Solomon's wealth and magnificence, notwithstanding its unparalleled display of splendid embellishments and costly profusion, was inferior in magnitude not only to the least of our cathedrals, but even to some of our parish churches, and if we examine the dimensions of his palaces according to the same measures, they will not bear any comparison with those erected by the princes, the noblemen, and many of the commoners of Europe.

If the Jews made no distinguished figure in the arts

* Mr. Gabb has brought forward much learned and ingenious reasoning on the subject, and without adopting his measures, it will be found difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the third and fourth verse of the 3d chap. 2 Chron.

 and

and sciences, if they were in this respect somewhat inferior to their Egyptian and Babylonian contemporaries, they have, however, left us the most elegant specimens of their literature. The Hebrew annals are remarkable for their conciseness, simplicity, and precision, and their didactic pieces are replete with the most sublime doctrines, as well as with precepts of the purest morality. Their poesy is not excelled either in brilliancy of ideas, or sublimity of sentiment, by that of any other people ancient or modern. The writings of the prophets are chiefly poetical, with a mixture of prosaic language, especially where narrative pieces are introduced. Among these, Isaiah is particularly distinguished by energy of diction, elevation of thought, and splendor of imagery. His writings, which have not been excelled by the greatest efforts of Grecian eloquence, remain a lasting monument of the perfection of the Hebrew literature.

Except the Phœnicians, none of the other nations which anciently inhabited the spacious country of Syria, appear to have at any time risen to such eminence as to procure them a conspicuous place in historical commemoration. All that is known of them is obtained from the incidental notices in sacred and profane historians, in treating of the affairs of the more celebrated nations, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Hebrews. In regard to the petty kingdoms and states of the southern parts, the connection of their history with that of the Israelites affords such collateral information as may give us a general idea of their customs and manners. These, however, are disgusting rather than interesting. Profligacy of morals, barbarous customs, degrading superstition, and gross idolatry, admitting licentious

rites,

rites, and requiring human sacrifices, are the horrid traits of their national character. With the state of the northern parts of Syria in those early ages, we are almost totally unacquainted. It is known, however, that this tract of country was the seat of a kingdom, of which Damascus was the capital, and which appears to have sometimes been independent and powerful; but in all probability was often tributary to the Assyrian monarchs. Syria and Assyria, indeed, are frequently confounded by the most ancient historians and geographers. On that part of the coast which was known to the Greeks by the name of Phœnicia, the maritime cities of Tyre and Sidon,* those primitive seats of navigation and commerce, are objects highly worthy of attention; but we have no distinct knowledge of their affairs. Their history is not the history of conquest, but of commerce, which was the grand object of their pursuit, the source of their wealth, and even the support of their existence. Confined to a narrow territory on the margin of the sea, the Tyrians turned their attention to that element, which offered them an extensive and valuable empire, neither obstructed by enemies, nor disputed by rivals. Their local circumstances determined their pursuits, and formed their national character. Their early proficiency in navigation, and several other arts, as well as their extensive commercial plans, are fully demonstrated by Solomon's choice of Tyrian artists for his buildings, and other magnificent works, and of their mariners for carrying on his Indian trade.†

* Of these cities Tyre is the most celebrated, although Sidon during a long time joined in its commerce.

† It has already been observed, that M. Rennell does not admit of the Tyrians trading to India. Geograph. of Herodot. p. 248.

The Tyrians shared with Egypt the commerce of India, which they carried on by the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulph. The latter route afforded them the means of supplying the great markets of Babylon and Nineveh, where a numerous population and an extravagant luxury must have created constant demands. Towards the west, they traded to all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, and perhaps had proceeded beyond the pillars of Hercules, in the ages here under consideration.* The merchants of Tyre are, in the scripture, represented as princes, and ranked among the great men of the earth. For an account of the multifarious traffic of Tyre, the inquisitive reader may consult the 27th chapter of the prophet Ezekiel, which exhibits the most distinct and comprehensive view of the commerce of the ancient world, and especially of Tyre its great emporium, that is any where found in the records of antiquity. Tyre, after a siege of thirteen years, was taken by Nebuchadnezzar; but the inhabitants by means of their shipping escaped with their wealth, and left only naked walls to the conqueror.† They afterwards built new Tyre on a small island opposite to the old city, and only half a mile from the continent.

Asia Minor, in those remote ages, comprized many wealthy and powerful states, as appears from the numerous auxiliaries with which their kings furnished the Babylonians in their last war against the Medes,‡ as well as from the opulence and splendor of Crœsus, the famous king of Lydia. But as we have no in-

* The Phœnicians are said to have founded Cadiz in Spain, about 1000 years before the Christian æra. Vellei. Paterc. lib. 1, cap. 22.

† Trade with Babylon and India is not expressly mentioned in the 27th chapter of Ezekiel, although highly probable.

‡ Xenophon ubi supra.

formation

formation concerning the ancient state of those regions, except what is collected from mutilated fragments and occasional hints of doubtful authenticity, nothing important or interesting can be said on so dark and perplexed a subject, relating to so early a period.

The contracted view, here exhibited, involves the history not only of the countries which now constitute the Asiatic part of the Ottoman empire, but also of all Asia as far as it is known, until the subversion of the Babylonian and the establishment of the Persian monarchy. After this great event Cyaxares, called in scripture Darius the Mede, became sovereign of the extensive dominions of Babylon and Media, and after reigning two years, was succeeded by Cyrus the Persian, his nephew, who had commanded his armies, and achieved those great conquests. Persia, first mentioned in history by the name of Elam, had scarcely been noticed from the time of Abraham and Chedorlaomer, until that of Cyrus.* Previous to the reign of this monarch, it appears to have been governed by its own princes, but dependent on Media. It would here be in vain to discuss the different opinions of ancient historians, relative to the origin of Cyrus. Rejecting, however, the romantic account of Herodotus,† the only probable supposition is, that he was the son of Cambysis, a Persian prince, and of Mandane, daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes, and consequently sister of Cyaxares, or Darius, his son and successor. Cyrus having ascended the throne after the death of his uncle, saw his vast empire, which included Persia, with all the countries now constitut-

* Genesis, ch. 4. Joseph. Antiq. jud. lib. 2.

† Herod. lib. 1, cap. 107, &c.

ing the Asiatic part of Turkey, settled in profound peace, and reigned seven years without any rival in power. This prince issued the famous edict for the restoration of the Jews, which was, after much opposition and intrigue, carried into execution in the manner recorded in scripture.* Historians are as much divided in their accounts of the death of Cyrus, as in those of his birth, and their contradictory relations only serve as a caution against the doubtful details of ancient history. We may, however, safely reject the extravagant tale of Herodotus, whose information relative to Persian affairs appears to have been extremely erroneous. Had Cyrus been slain in Scythia, and his body mangled as they relate, it is difficult to conceive how it should have been recovered out of the hands of the barbarians, and interred at Pasaganda in Persia. All writers, however, agree that he was buried in that place, and his tomb was to be seen in the time of Alexander.† It is, therefore, the most reasonable to adopt the sober evidence of Xenophon, who says that he died in peace, and covered with glory.‡ Cyrus appears to have been one of the most accomplished, as well as the most successful heroes of antiquity.

Asiatic Turkey, constituting a part of the Persian empire during the space of about 200 years, which elapsed from the time of Cyrus to that of Alexander, its history is involved in that of Persia, and distinctly considered does not afford any striking or memorable events.

* Vide Nehemiah, Ezra, Daniel, Esdras and Joseph. Antiq. Judaic.

† See on this subject Curtius, Plutarch, and Arrian, and particularly Strabo. Geog. lib. 5.

‡ According to Xenophon's account, Cyrus was forty years of age when he took the command of the army, sixty-one when he captured Babylon, and about seventy when he died. Cyroped. lib. 1, p. 7 and 8.

events. These countries, together with the rest of the empire, were divided into satrapies or vice-royalties, each of which paid an annual tribute.* In this manner they remained tolerably tranquil under the Persian government. The Jews lived peaceably under the protection of the Persians, enjoying their own laws, and being governed by their sanhedrim and high priest. The Ionian cities on the coast of Asia Minor, for a time enjoyed the same privileges, but at last having engaged in a revolt in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, they were finally reduced. The assistance which the Athenians had on this occasion afforded the Ionians, gave rise to the famous wars between Persia and Greece. The revolt of Babylon, which happened in the same reign, also requires a commemoration in this place, as that city was within the limits of the countries here under consideration. The Persian monarchs had not only imposed heavy taxes on the Babylonians, but also removed the royal residence from Babylon to Suza, a measure which greatly diminished the grandeur of the former city, so late the splendid queen of the east. The Babylonians, therefore, taking advantage of the troubles which had agitated Persia on occasion of the death of Cambyses, and the unsettled state of the empire in consequence of the Magian conspiracy, and the subsequent murder of Smerdis, had provided immense magazines of provisions, and openly erected the standard of revolt. Darius Hystaspes being firmly established on the throne, put himself at the head of the whole force of Persia, and laid siege to Babylon. The citizens seeing themselves closely blockaded by so numerous a

* For the twenty satrapies of the Persian empire, see Rennell's Geograph. of Herodot. sect. 11.

force,

force, thought of nothing but wearying out the enemy by supporting a long siege, and waiting the chance of favorable contingencies. In order to prevent the consumption of their provisions, they took the most barbarous resolution recorded in history, and carried it into execution with rigorous exactness. They agreed to rid themselves of unnecessary mouths by a general massacre of old men, women, and children. Fathers, mothers, wives, children, and sisters, were put to death without distinction or mercy. Notwithstanding the propensity which the Babylonians had to poligamy, each citizen was allowed to keep only one single wife and one maid-servant to do the necessary work.*

In consequence of this barbarous policy, the revolters thought themselves in a condition to set the whole power of the Persian empire at defiance. Darius having laid a whole year and eight months before Babylon, without being able to make any impression on its impregnable fortifications, endeavoured, by various stratagems, to make himself master of the city. Among these, he did not neglect to attempt the scheme which had formerly succeeded so well with Cyrus; but the vigilance of the Babylonians rendered all his efforts ineffectual. He began at last to despair of success, when Zopyrus, one of his principal generals, put him in possession of the place by a singular stratagem. Having cut off his own nose and ears, and cruelly mangled his body, he fled in this condition to the Babylonians, pretending to have received this barbarous treatment from Darius, and imploring their protection and means of revenge. The citizens seeing a man of his distinction so shockingly mangled, gave implicit credit to his story, and entrusted him with the

* Herodot. lib. 3.

command of some troops. Having made some successful sallies, he obtained their entire confidence, and at last found an opportunity of letting the Persians into the city.* Darius having thus obtained possession of Babylon, put 3,000 of the principal citizens to death by the excruciating punishment of impaling, and almost demolished its celebrated walls, reducing them from the height of 200 to that of 50 cubits, the altitude mentioned by Strabo.† This second capture of Babylon was also the second step towards its destruction, being a blow far more fatal than its conquest by Cyrus.

The history of Asiatic Turkey, from this period to the fall of the Persian empire, presents nothing worthy of commemoration. On the Macedonian invasion, the position of those countries naturally exposed them to the first attacks of the enemy. The provinces were therefore successively subdued by the conquering arms of Alexander. The city of Tyre, which after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar had, as already observed, been rebuilt, not as before on the coast of the continent, but on an island half a mile distant from the shore, by sustaining a siege of seven months, greatly impeded the progress of the Macedonian conqueror. Alexander caused an immense mole to be constructed, which at length united the island with the continent; and Tyre was obliged to submit to his victorious arms. From the vigorous resistance of the Tyrians, it seems that they had enjoyed great liberty under the Persians, and were strongly attached to their government. Gaza was another of the cities

* Herodot. lib. 3. cap. 150 to 158.

† Strabo, lib. 6. Rennell does not think that the walls were ever any higher than fifty cubits, or twenty-five yards. Geog. of Herodot. p. 388.

of

of Syria, which made the most vigorous resistance against the Greeks.* Jerusalem submitted without opposition; and the Jews obtained a confirmation of their privileges.† Alexander, after having completed the conquest of the Persian empire, made Babylon his residence and the capital of his dominions. The central position of that ancient city, almost equally distant from the Hellespont and the Indus, rendered it extremely suitable for that purpose.

The death of Alexander and the division of his empire gave rise to numerous revolutions in these countries. In another place I have exhibited a sketch of the convulsions which agitated Asia during those contests between the Macedonian generals. It is therefore unnecessary to repeat the relation or the remarks already made‡ The noble and successful struggle of the Jews for their liberties, under the conduct of those celebrated patriots and heroes, Judas Maccabeus and his brethren, with the establishment of the second Jewish monarchy in that illustrious family, are events amply detailed in the Book of Maccabees and the works of Flavius Josephus. The northern provinces of Syria, with part of Assyria and of Asia Minor, remained under the dominion of the Greek princes, the descendants of Alexander's generals, till the Grecian kingdom of Asia was conquered by the Romans. But Persia, with Chaldea, and the greatest part of Assyria, were seized by the Parthians, who put an end to the kingdom of the Seleucidæ, and erected a new empire about A.A.C. 260. During the period which that kingdom existed, the seat of its government had been removed from Babylon to Seleucia, a city founded by

* Quintus Curtius, lib. 4.—Plutarch in Alexandro.

† Joseph. Antiq. Judaic. ‡ Letters on Ancient History.

Seleucus,

Seleucus, who seized those countries on the partition of Alexander's empire. Seleucia stood about thirty geographical, or thirty-four and two-thirds British miles north-north-east from Babylon, but the distance between the two cities was about forty-four Roman miles by the road.* From the æra of its foundation in A.A.C. 293, may be dated the final decline of Babylon,† which till that period was large and opulent. It is reasonable to suppose, that as materials for building are scarce in that country, and the conveyance by water was easy, a great part of those of Babylon were gradually removed to Seleucia, in proportion as the latter city increased in population and the former was abandoned by its inhabitants.‡ Its massy walls and stupendous structures would indeed afford an ample supply of brick for that purpose. During a long time after the overthrow of the Grecian kingdom, the city of Seleucia remained an independent Greek republic, although the Parthian dominions extended almost to its gates; and in the time of Pliny it contained about 600,000 inhabitants.§ Seleucia was destroyed by the Romans, A.D. 165, during their wars with the Parthians,|| and its ruins undoubtedly contributed to furnish materials for the building of Bagdad. Ctesiphon, famous in Roman history, stood on the east side of the Tigris at the distance of about three miles from Seleucia, which was on the western side of that river.¶ This place, which was formerly a village, was, in consequence of being the frequent residence of the Par-

* Rennell's Geog. of Herod. p. 350. † Ibid. 386.

‡ Ibid. p. 363—367.

§ Tacit. Annals, lib. 11.—Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. 6, cap. 26.

|| Eutrop. lib. 8, and Dion. lib. 71. Neither of these authors, however relates the transaction with perspicuity.

¶ Pliny, ubi supra.

 thian

thian kings, who spent a great part of the year in encampments, gradually raised to the rank of a city, and became the capital of their empire. It has perished, however, in its turn; but some lofty walls and ruinous towers, the remains of the stately palace of Chosroes, are monuments of its ancient greatness.* Such has been the rise and fall of those three celebrated cities. Their ruins are barely visible. Those of Babylon exhibit only shapeless masses, rising in the form of hills, spread over a vast extent of ground, and in many places enveloped in woods and coppices. The heap which is supposed to be the remains of the temple and tower of Belus, is about sixty yards in height, and not distinguishable as the remains of a structure erected by human hands, except by the bricks, earthen vessels, marbles, statues, &c. that are found in it by digging.† The Arabian town of Hellah, containing 10,000 or 12,000 inhabitants, is situated within the inclosure of ancient Babylon, and built out of its ruins. The centre of Babylon appears to be about fifty British miles nearly south from Bagdad.

Syria being reduced under the Roman power, the Jews, divided into different factions, called in that conquering people to settle their disputes. Jerusalem was in consequence taken by Pompey; and Judea, together with the rest of Syria, was reduced to a Roman province. A third Jewish kingdom, however, was erected by the Romans, and Herod, the son of

* Irwin's Trav. vol. 2, p. 351, &c.—Jackson's Journey from India, p. 86. The palace of Chosroes was built of bricks brought from Babylon. Rennell's Geog. of Herodot. p. 377.

† Rennell's Geog. of Herodot. sect. 14, which is entirely dedicated to an enquiry into the situation, dimensions, population, public edifices, ruins, &c. of ancient Babylon.

Antipater,

Antipater, the Idumean, was made king. After the reign of Agrippa, his grandson, the monarchy was again abolished, and Judea made a province of the Roman empire. During the reigns of these princes, Jerusalem and Judea were in a flourishing state, the kings being considered as friends and allies of Rome, and reigning in peace under her protection.

The reign of the first of these princes, Herod the Great, at the same time that Augustus governed the Roman empire, is for ever memorable, as being the period in which the nativity of Jesus Christ took place. This great event, more important in its consequences than any other that has ever marked the annals of the world, has produced a revolution in human ideas and in human circumstances, more decisive, more extensive, more durable, and certainly more beneficial, than all others that are recorded in history. It has produced an entire new order of things, afforded new hopes, and opened new prospects to the human race, extended the views of men, and enlarged the sphere of the intellectual world. In comparison with this grand revolution, in the general state and ideas of mankind, the rise and fall of empires are events which sink into insignificancy.* The preaching and crucifixion of Jesus at Jerusalem, and the propagation of Christianity from that capital of Judea into almost every part of the world, are events too well known to be further displayed in this compendium. But the rejection of their promised Messiah, entailed on the Jews such dreadful calamities as have ever since been regarded as visible marks of Divine vengeance. Oppressed by the Roman governors, agitated by factions

* See the author's Letters on Ancient History for more ample reflections on this subject.

of profligate malecontents, and apparently impelled by a judicial infatuation, the great council of Jerusalem took the desperate resolution of entering on a war with that power, which had conquered the whole civilized world. The issue was not less disastrous than the measure was desperate. After suffering all the horrors of foreign and civil war, Judea was at length subdued. Jerusalem was taken by storm, the city was totally demolished; its superb temple, which had been rebuilt by Herod the Great in an extraordinary style of magnificence, was levelled with the ground; and the loss of lives exceeded every thing recorded on similar occasions in ancient or modern history.* This war, begun by Vespasian and finished by Titus, put a final period to the national existence of the Jews, who were finally dispersed into all parts of the globe, still remaining a distinct people, and to this very day, exhibiting a strong presumptive proof of the Divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth. The Jewish historian informs us, that the city of Jerusalem was about four miles in compass, and gives a very particular description of its towers, castles, and fortifications, as well as of its magnificent temple, which served at once as a sanctuary and a fortress.† But we have no means of estimating its ordinary population. From the numbers which perished in the siege, no computation can be made; Jerusalem was the great rendezvous of the armed bands from all parts of Judea, and the point where the whole military force of the nation was at last concentrated. The siege also being formed at the

* According to Josephus no fewer than 1,100,000 of the Jewish nation were destroyed in this war, of whom the greatest part appear to have perished in the siege of Jerusalem. Joseph. de Bello Judaico.

† Josephus de Bello Judaico.

time

time of the paschal solemnity, vast crowds of people, who had come from all parts of the country for the celebration of that festival, were shut in by the Roman armies, without a possibility of retreat.

Asiatic Turkey being now entirely reduced into Roman provinces, and from this time successively composing a part of the Roman, the Byzantine,* the Saracen, and Ottoman empires, must be considered as a whole, without any regard to its ancient divisions. The events of its history must consequently be viewed in subordination to the revolutions of those powerful states, to which it has been successively subject. During the existence of the Romans, and afterwards of the Greek or eastern empire, these countries were generally in a flourishing state, although, like all frontier provinces, sometimes exposed to the Parthian, and afterwards to the Persian invasions. After the establishment of Christianity by Constantine, Jerusalem was re-edified, and became a splendid Christian city. The church of the Holy Sepulchre, erected by imperial piety and munificence, attracted the devotion of Christians, as the temple had formerly done that of the Jews. Pilgrimages soon rose into vogue, and Jerusalem, or its environs, became the pious or fashionable retreat of the devout and opulent. The emperor, Julian, impelled by his hatred to Christianity, attempted the re-edification of the Jewish temple; but was either compelled by a miracle, or induced by the Persian war, to abandon the undertaking. Historians of great reputation relate, that subterraneous fires, bursting out from the foundations in a terrific manner,

* It may not be amiss to observe, that after the fall of the western empire, the other part of which Constantinople remained the capital, is by writers indifferently denominated the eastern Greek or Byzantine empire.

 destroyed

destroyed the work as fast as it advanced, and finally caused it to be relinquished. It must be confessed, that ancient history, both Pagan and Christian, by its multiplication of miracles, disgusts the intelligent and reasoning mind; but it must also be acknowledged, that the supernatural frustration of this remarkable undertaking is much better authenticated, and was also a fact which lay far more open to investigation, than the greatest part of those miraculous events, which interested or superstitious writers have related for the amusement of credulous readers. Julian is universally allowed to have had this design greatly at heart; and it is difficult to assign a political cause for its relinquishment. His preparations for the Persian war can scarcely be deemed a sufficient reason for interrupting such a work. The presence of an emperor is not necessary to the building of a temple.*

After a series of those ordinary occurrences which are met with in all political histories, these countries were destined to undergo, in the seventh century, rapid and extraordinary revolutions. Phocas, the centurion, having, about the year 602, usurped the throne of Constantinople and murdered the emperor, Maurice, with his whole family, Chosroes, king of Persia, who had been under great obligations to the friendship of Maurice, refused to recognise the title of the usurper. This gave rise to a war between the Greek and the Persian empires, which, in regard to the animosity and vigour with which it was carried on, the magnitude of its events, and the importance of its consequences, claims a distinguished place in history. Chosroes rendered himself master of the Roman possessions in Mesopotamia,

* Mr. Gibbon, although no friend to any thing that favours Christianity, finds himself puzzled by this piece of history. Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 4.

sopotamia, passed the Euphrates, and captured several cities of Syria. During these transactions, Heraclius, son of the exarch or governor of Assyria, conducting a fleet and an army to Constantinople, deposed Phocas, and having put him to death, ascended the throne of the Byzantine empire. The accession of Phocas had furnished a cause or pretext of the war; but his deposition and death did not put a stop to hostilities. Heraclius mounted the throne A.D. 610, at which time the Persian monarch had carried his arms far into Syria, and made himself master of its capital, Antioch. The intolerant zeal of the magi converted a quarrel of policy into a war of religion. The animosity of the Jews against the Christians seconded their invidious representations; and the savage fury of the Arabs contributed, in no small degree, to the excesses committed by the Persian armies. In 614, Jerusalem was taken by assault; the sepulchre of Christ, and the superb churches erected by Constantine and Helena, were destroyed or greatly defaced, and an incredible number of the Christian inhabitants were massacred by the Arabians and the Jews attached to the Persian armies. Damascus likewise submitted to Chosroes; and that conqueror having directed his march into Africa, Egypt, which had 1,000 years before been subject to the Persians, was, in 616, again subdued by their victorious arms. During these transactions another army advanced through Asia Minor, and having completed the conquest of that country as far as the Bosphorus, the Persian empire was once more extended from the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates to its ancient western limits under the successors of Cyrus. A Persian army remained during the space of ten years encamped at Chalcedon, on the eastern

side of the Bosphorus, opposite to Constantinople; and had Chosroes possessed any naval force, the Byzantine empire must now have been brought to its final termination.

At this tremendous crisis, Heraclius, despairing of the safety of his capital, had determined on removing to Carthage. But the patriarch remonstrating against the measure, and exerting the powers of religion in the cause of his country, conducted the emperor to the church of St. Sophia, and extorted from him a solemn oath, on the altar of the Supreme Being, that he would live and die with his people. The Persian monarch would not consent to any peace, but on the most ignominious terms; and Heraclius prepared to equal the actions of Cæsar. It would have been the last step of imprudence to attack the Persian camp at Chalcedon, as the loss of a battle within sight of the capital might have proved fatal to the empire. But the Greeks were masters of the sea, and a fleet of gallies and store-ships was assembled in the harbour. With this naval force, Heraclius resolved to transport himself and his army into those parts where the enemy did not expect an attack. Having recommended his children to the faith of the people, vested the civil and military power in the most proper hands, and authorised the patriarch and senate to defend or surrender the capital as exigencies might require, the emperor embarked with his forces on the boldest expedition ever undertaken since the days of Hannibal and Scipio. Descending the Hellespont, he landed on the confines of Syria, and acting in every particular the part of a consummate general, inspired his soldiers with the same courage and patriotism by which he was animated. Penetrating through Cilicia to the

mountains of Taurus, by skilful manœuvres he defeated the Persians, and convinced the world that their arms were not invincible. After a successful and glorious campaign, he placed his troops in winter quarters, and returned to his capital in order to prepare for a second expedition. Having mustered a select band, he again embarked, but pursuing a different route, he sailed from Constantinople by the Black Sea to Trebisond; and assembling his forces, which had wintered in those regions, he marched against Chosroes, who retreated on his approach. Two successive campaigns were signalized by the most rapid conquests on the part of Heraclius, who, in revenge for the injuries done to his religion and empire, every where extinguished the sacred fire, demolished the temples of the magi, and destroyed the statues of Chosroes, who had arrogated to himself divine honours. The total destruction of Ormia, the birth-place of Zoroaster, was also a just retaliation of the calamities inflicted by the Persians on Jerusalem. During these operations 50,000 Greek captives were delivered, and in their grateful acclamations, Heraclius undoubtedly experienced the most pleasing sensations that victory could give. Pursuing with ardour his well-concerted and successful plan of operations, he drove the Persians quite out of the field, and compelled them to shut themselves up in the fortified cities of Assyria and Media, after a vast number of their satraps, and the flower of their martial youth, were either slain or made prisoners. In a battle fought on the banks of the Sarus, in Cilicia, the emperor is said to have slain a Persian of a gigantic size, whom he threw into the river. After a long and successful expedition of three years, he returned to

Constantinople,

Constantinople, to receive the applauses of a grateful people.

A bloody and ruinous war of twenty years, had by this time wasted the resources of the two empires: Chosroes, however, resolved to make one desperate effort, and exhausted the remaining strength of his dominions in new levies. His vast military force was divided into three formidable bodies, one of which was destined to act against Heraclius; the second was stationed to prevent his junction with his brother Theodorus; and the third reinforced the camp at Chalcedon, in order to make, in conjunction with the Avars, who then possessed Hungary and the adjacent countries, a desperate attack on Constantinople. In the year 626, an army of 80,000 Avars advanced, and completely invested the metropolis of the eastern empire. The shores of Europe and Asia were covered with the hostile banners; and during ten successive days Constantinople sustained the formidable assaults of the Avars. These barbarians, in their wars with the empire, had made considerable progress in the arts of attack; but the Greeks, better skilled in the management of various engines, constantly repulsed them with prodigious slaughter. The Constantinopolitan galleys, commanding the Bosphorus, destroyed the Slavonian canoes, and rendered the Persians, on the Asiatic shore, idle spectators of the defeat of their allies. The Avars, at last, wearied out with continued and useless efforts, disgusted with ill success, and beginning to want provisions, were desirous of leaving this scene of slaughter; and their chagan, or chief, seeing himself in danger of being forsaken by his vassals, was obliged

to

to give the signal for raising the siege. Thus Constantinople triumphed over the barbarian force of Europe and Asia.

Heraclius, in the mean while, renewing his operations in the distant regions bordering on the Euxine and Caspian Seas, engaged in his service 40,000 Chozars.* The most signal success attended his well concerted plans. On the banks of the Tigris, in or near the place where Nineveh once stood, a battle was fought, which decided the fate of the war. The vast army of the Persians was almost entirely cut to pieces; and Rhazates, their general, is said to have fallen by the emperor's own hand. Heraclius, by rapid marches, advanced to the royal palace of Dastagard, a place of extraordinary wealth and magnificence. This seat of regal luxury being plundered and burnt, the victorious Greeks still advanced, extending their conquests, and recovering great numbers of prisoners. The proud monarch of Persia, who had constantly rejected all overtures of peace, seeing fire and sword carried into the very heart of his dominions, shut himself up in the fortifications of Ctesiphon. Broken with age and misfortune, and perceiving symptoms of his approaching dissolution, he resolved to place on the throne Merdaza, his favorite son. But Sirocs resolving both to assert and anticipate his right of primogeniture, conspired with the Satraps, dethroned his father, and threw him into a dungeon, where the unfortunate monarch soon expired. Whether grief, hunger, or torture, put a period to his existence, is unknown. Sirocs having massacred his eighteen brothers, ascended the Persian throne, and immediately concluded a

* The Chozars were a powerful Turkish or Tatarian tribe. De Guigne's Hist. des Huns, tom. 2. part 2.

peace

peace with Heraclius. All prisoners were restored, and the ancient boundaries of the Greek and Persian empires were established. Restitution was also made of the wood of the cross, which Chosroes had carried from Jerusalem. Heraclius returned to Constantinople covered with well-earned glory, and hailed by all ranks of his subjects as the saviour of his country.* He went the next year to Jerusalem, to attend at the restitution of the cross to the holy sepulchre; and the identity of the relic being attested by the prudent patriarch, it again attracted the resort of pilgrims.

Such was the termination of one of the longest, as well as the most obstinate and sanguinary contests recorded in history; but its ultimate consequences were not yet discovered, nor even suspected. Constantinople had reduced her Persian rival to such a state of depression, as seemed to promise a long security from any attack on the side of Asia. But political science is unable to investigate the decrees of Divine Providence; nor could the contracted sphere of human foresight comprehend the distant view of the singular revolution that was about to take place in human affairs. The external form, relations, and boundaries of the two empires, had undergone no alteration; but their vitals were exhausted by this long and destructive contest; and their weakness contributed to the rise and aggrandizement of a power, till then unknown in the world.

The Arabians, previous to the period now under consideration, had scarcely been noticed in the history of nations. Sometimes, indeed, their rapacious

* The relation of this important war is abridged from ch. 46. of Gibbon's Dec. Rom Emp. who appears to have carefully examined and compared the original authors.

bands

bands have contributed to swell the numbers, and augment the disorders of the Babylonian,* Persian, or other foreign armies † and sometimes numerous hordes, issuing out of their extensive wildernesses, by their desultory invasions, have struck terror into the adjacent countries. The neighbouring nations frequently experienced their ravages; but the annals of the world did not record any of their conquests. Previous to the seventh century, the history of the Arabians was that of rapacious independence. Divided into numerous tribes, hovering round their extensive deserts, or penetrating into their inmost recesses, in search of a few fertile spots interspersed in the boundless waste, they have in all ages led a pastoral and wandering life. From the times of remote antiquity, however, towns and cities existed in the southern part, as well as near the shores of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulph. In these a profitable trade was carried on by caravans between the Persian Gulph and the fertile countries of Egypt and Syria. Among the chief of these cities, were Medina and Mecca. The latter in particular, although situated in an ungrateful soil, was grown rich by commerce and rapine. Above five centuries previous to this period, a celebrated writer had remarked, that the attention of the Arabians was equally directed to these two different pursuits.‡ Mecca was a republic, in which the tribe of Koreish appear to have had an ascendancy similar to that which the Medici possessed at

* Xenophon Cyropedia, lib. 1.

† Joseph. Antiq. Jud. and de Bello Judaico, in various places. The great army which invaded Judea in the reign of Asa, appears to have come from Arabia.

‡ Pliny Hist. Nat. lib. vi. cap. 32.—Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, vol. 5.

Florence.

Florence.* Whether Mahomet was of this eminent tribe, or of a plebeian origin, is uncertain and equally unimportant. Whatever might be his extraction, his property was small. He engaged himself as a servant to a rich widow of Mecca, who bestowed on him her hand and her fortune, and raised him to the rank of an opulent citizen. He is said to have been a man of extraordinary bodily and mental accomplishments. The former part of this character is probable, the latter is unquestionable. The endowments of his mind, however, were the gifts of nature, not of education, since, as it is asserted, he was wholly illiterate.†

Such was the man, who was destined to effect the greatest revolution in human ideas, as well as in human affairs, that has ever taken place since the establishment of Christianity. Inspired by enthusiasm or ambition, he withdrew to a cave about three miles from the city, and having there spent some time in silent contemplation, announced himself a prophet of the most high, and proclaimed the religion of the Koran. The religion then prevailing in Arabia was Zabaism, which, as in all other countries, had degenerated into the grossest idolatry. Each tribe, each family, had its particular rites and object of worship. But an universal temple, called the kaaba, or holy house, had, from time immemorial, existed at Mecca. Hither each tribe had introduced its domestic worship, and this celebrated Arabian pantheon was filled

* Machiavel's Hist. Florence, book 7 and 8.

† See note on this subject in Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. ch. 50. For the extraction and rise of the Arabian prophet, see Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, and Gagnier Vie de Mahom. tom. 1. with the narrative of Abulfeda in his preface.

with

with idols of all the different shapes that fantastic superstitition could form or imagine. The origin of the kaaba is unknown; but it may reasonably claim a high antiquity. All Arabia revered its superior sanctity; and in the last month of each year, the city and temple of Mecca were crowded with pilgrims, a custom which the koran has confirmed. But universal toleration, together with uncivilized freedom, prevailed in Arabia; and while the adjacent countries were shaken with the storms of conquest and tyranny, the victims of political and religious oppression, took refuge in the deep recesses of those extensive deserts. In the reigns of Titus and Adrian, great numbers of Jews had retired into Arabia, and Christians of all the persecuted sects had sought the same calm retreat. Arabia, therefore, displayed a mixture of Pagans, Jews, and Christians, of all sects and denominations. Mahomet, although destitute of literature, had studied the book of nature and of man, and conceived the great design of instituting a religion that might unite all the Arabians under its banners; and his scheme was admirably calculated for that purpose. His observations on the state of the world, might convince him that idolatry was not only an unreasonable, but a declining system. His naturally strong understanding and sound judgment, would enable him to perceive the existence of one Supreme and sole Deity to be so rational an article of belief, that no permanent system of religion could be established except, on that solid basis. By testifying his regard for the scriptures, and acknowledging the prophetic character and divine mission of Moses and Jesus, he lessened the prejudices of the Jews and Christians against his doctrine, while his recommendation, and practice of prayer, fasting, and

mass, acquired him the reputation of superior sanctity. Comprising in his grand design a military, as well as a religious system, he promised a paradise of sensual delights, to all who should fall in the cause of his faith. He allowed poligamy, to which he knew the Arabians to be strongly inclined; but he reprobated drunkenness, to which they had much less propensity. Considering intoxication as a vice degrading to human nature, and incompatible with a capacity for great undertakings, he resolved to take away the temptation to a habit so pernicious, by prohibiting the use of inebriating liquors. To investigate all the particulars of his system, would lead to a tedious prolixity; and it suffices to observe, that they were admirably adapted to the ideas and circumstances of his countrymen. His pretensions, however, to a cœlestial authority, excited the jealousy of the citizens of Mecca, and a powerful faction expelled him from his native city. In the year of the Christian æra 622, the memorable epoch of the Hegira, Mahomet, with his friend Abubekar, and a few other followers, escaping from Mecca, fled to Medina, where he assumed the military, as well as the prophetic character. Having made many proselytes in that place, he assembled a determined and daring band, inspired with enthusiasm, and animated with the expectation of a paradise of sensual delights, which he promised to all his followers, but with a superior degree of glory and pleasure to those who should fall in the cause of the koran. This was the first vital spark of the empire of the Arabs. Here he assumed the exercise of the regal, as well as of the sacerdotal function; and declared himself authorised to use force as well as persuasion, in order to propagate his doctrines. Liberty of conscience

science was granted to Christians and Jews, on condition of the payment of tribute; but to idolators, no other alternative was left but conversion or the sword. The spoils of war were regulated by a divine law: a fifth part was at the disposal of the prophet; the rest was divided among the soldiers. A double share was allowed to the cavalry; and the portion due to the slain devolved to their widows and orphans.* By inculcating, in the most absolute sense, the doctrines of fate and predestination, he extinguished the principles of fear, and exalted the courage of his followers into a dauntless confidence. By impressing strongly on the ardent imagination of the Arabs a voluptuous picture of the invisible world, he brought them to regard death as an object not of dread, but of hope and and desire. From all sides the rovers of the desert were allured to the standard of religion and plunder; and the holy robbers were soon able to intercept the trading caravans. In all enterprises of danger and difficulty, their leader promised them the assistance of the angel Gabriel, with his legions of the heavenly host, and his authoratitive eloquence impressed on their enthusiastic imagination the forms of those angelic warriors, invisible to mortal eyes.† By these arts he inspired his followers with an irresistible enthusiasm. The sacred band of believers, consisting of only 313 men, attacked and plundered the caravan of Mecca, escorted by 950 of the tribe of Koreish, the bravest of the citizens;‡ and to this day the pious pilgrims annually commemorate the victory of the prophet.§ A regular war was now commenced between the congregation

* Reland Dissert. Miscell. tom. 3. dissert. 10.

† Koran, ch. 3 and 4. with the notes of Sale.

‡ Id. ch. 3 and 8.

§ Shaws Travels, p. 477.

 of

of the Faithful and the citizens of Mecca. The Koreish brought into the field 2800 foot, and 200 horse. The sacred standard of Mahomet was supported by only 950 believers, whose eagerness for plunder, alone prevented them from gaining the victory. In this engagement the prophet himself was wounded, and several of his disciples were sent to enjoy the delights of Paradise. The ensuing year, 625, the Meccans, with about 10,000 men, laid siege to Medina, but without success, and finally lost all hopes of subverting the throne, or of putting a stop to the conquests of the exiled prophet, who, on their retreat, immediately turned his arms against the Jewish tribes of Nadhir, Koraidha, and Chebar. These were successively reduced and cruelly treated. But the conquest of Mecca, his native city, was the grand object of his zeal and ambition. His power was increased by the submission of several Arabian tribes; and the army of the believers, from a few hundreds, was increased to 10,000 enthusiastic warriors. Mecca surrendered on his approach, and acknowledged him as the apostle of God. Thus, after seven years of exile, the fugitive Mahomet was enthroned as the prince and the prophet of his country.

The conquest of Mecca determined the faith and obedience of the principal Arabian tribes; and the obstinate remnant, which still adhered to the idolatry of their ancestors, was soon subdued or extirpated. The famous kaaba, or pantheon of Mecca, was purified, and 350 idols, with which it was defiled, were broken in pieces. The sentence of destruction was in the same manner executed on all the idols of Arabia. All the people of that vast country adopted the worship of one God, and acknowledged Mahomet as his

prophet

prophet and their sovereign. The rites of pilgrimage were, through piety or policy, re-established. The prophet himself set an example to future ages, by fulfilling the duties of a pilgrim; and 114,000 pious believers accompanied his last visit to the kaaba, or house of God.* A perpetual law was also enacted, prohibiting all unbelievers from setting foot within the precincts of the holy city.†

A revolution was thus effected in an obscure corner of the world, which shortly after subverted, or shook the most powerful monarchies, and extended its effects to the distant regions of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The prophet of Arabia commenced hostilities with the Greek empire, and unfurled his sacred banners on the confines of Syria; but after having lost some of his most intrepid commanders, without having made any great progress, the war was neither of long continuance, nor productive of any remarkable events. The mission and life of Mahomet now drew near to an end. During the space of four years, his health had gradually declined, a circumstance, which he ascribed to the effect of poison, administered to him by a Jewish female at Chaibar. Conscious of his approaching dissolution, he made a solemn appeal to the people on the subject of the equity of his government, and offered retribution to any one who could accuse him of injustice or oppression. It is said, that a voice from the crowd, demanded of him three drams of silver. He heard the complaint of the individual, and finding it to be just, satisfied the demand, and thanked the man for accusing him in this world, rather than at the day of judgment. He en-

* Gagnier Vie de Mahomet, tom. 3.

† Niebuhr Description de l'Arabie, p. 308.

franchised his slaves, and viewed with calm tranquillity the approach of death. Till the third day preceeding his dissolution, he performed the functions of public prayer, and asserting to the last the Divine authority of his mission, he expired, at about the age of sixty-three, with the firmness of a philosopher, and the faith of an enthusiast.* He died and was buried at Medina, not at Mecca as vulgar tradition has reported; and the fable of his tomb suspended by loadstones at the latter place, is too absurd to merit refutation. His tomb, which is placed on the ground at Medina, and confers on that city a reputation for sanctity inferior only to that of Mecca, is annually visited by thousands of pilgrims.†

Among the distinguished characters which the history of mankind exhibits to the contemplation of the moral philosopher, there is scarcely one that in a higher degree merits attention, or that affords a more interesting subject of curious speculation and profound reflection, than that of the celebrated prophet of Arabia. Perhaps, also, there is scarcely one that has been more erroneously estimated. An inordinate ambition is generally supposed to have impelled him to form his

* This account of Mahomet, is chiefly abridged from Prideaux's life of Mahomet, and Gagnier's Vie de Mahomet, with his notes on Abulfeda; but I have in general preferred the latter as the most impartial; I have rejected several popular tales and fables invented by the Greeks, such as his fits of the epilepsy, and his tame pigeon taught to descend and whisper in his ear, as I cannot find them attested on any good authority. For the account of the death, &c. of the prophet, see Gagnier, tom. 3. But these particulars, however, could be transmitted only by his attendants. Nor can I find any satisfactory evidence for the story of Sergius, the monk; but if Mahomet was ignorant of letters, he must have had some assistant in composing the koran.

† Gagnier vie de Mahomet, tom. 3. Reland de Relig. Mahom. lib. 2, cap. 19.

his grand project of proselytism and conquest. The supposition, indeed, appears inseparable from a view of his conduct. Other considerations, however, may have presented themselves to his mind, in conjunction with his views of personal aggrandizement and extensive sway. In great enterprises the actor has one grand object in view; one leading and powerful motive generally determines his conduct; but others of a less forcible nature not unfrequently present themselves, in conjunction with that predominant impulse. Such are the accessory views and subordinate considerations often made use of to justify or palliate those, which have a more decided influence to reconcile conscience with inclination, and combine duty with interest. This kind of association produces, in certain cases and under certain circumstances, that union of enthusiasm and ambition which usually characterises such as form projects similar to those of the Arabian prophet. In reviewing the conduct of Mahomet, as the founder of a new religion and a new empire, ambition must be considered as his predominant passion, and the leading principle which gave the first impulse to so great an undertaking as that of assuming and sustaining the character of a legislator and a reformer. But in a scheme of so bold, so complicated, and so extraordinary a nature, the execution of which presented numberless difficulties, it can scarcely be doubted that a variety of considerations presented themselves to his mind; and if these could be completely developed, perhaps his character might appear in a more favorable light, than that in which it is generally viewed in this quarter of the globe.

In making an impartial estimate of the qualifica-

tions which distinguished the prophet of Arabia, it must be acknowledged that the vigour of his mind, and the measure of his intellectual powers, appear to have been extraordinary. At the commencement of his mission, his hopes could rest only on a very precarious foundation. The difficulties which he had to encounter were great. During a considerable time, converts were slowly made, and his prospects of success were far from being such as could animate his efforts, or flatter his hopes. Amidst all these embarrassing circumstances, his enterprising spirit, his steady fortitude, and his patient perseverance, command admiration. But among the distinguishing characteristics of his mind, his extraordinary talent of knowing mankind, is the most remarkable. No one had ever more accurately, or more successfully, studied human nature. No one more exactly knew what suited the ideas and inclinations of men, or more perfectly understood the method of gaining an ascendancy over their minds, and of rendering their passions subservient to a great design. An impartial view of the character and conduct of this extraordinary man, shews that he was formed for every thing that is great, that his ideas were grand and elevated, and his views extensive.

That these were conspicuous qualities of his mind, may be boldly acknowledged; but in appreciating his conduct in a moral point of view, we lie under great disadvantages. In order to form in this respect a just estimate, we must divest ourselves of prejudices imbibed almost with our first rudiments of literature, and our first acquaintance with history. We must not view in the Arabian prophet the enemy of our religion, whose appearance in the world has been

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productive of consequences the most disastrous to Christianity; we must regard him simply as the legislator of a nation, and the founder of an empire. The motives of his actions, and the integrity of his conduct, must not be estimated by the standard of Christian or Jewish morality. If we suppose that he was convinced of the truth of the Mosaical or the Christian revelation, we must consider him as the most flagitious profligate, a blasphemer, an impostor, acting contrary to the dictates of his conscience, in founding a false and corrupt religion, and impiously contemning all Divine and human laws. His history, however, affords no documents that can authorize us to carry so far our censures. The Arabian legislator does not appear to have ever been convinced of the truth of either Judaism or Christianity; nor is there the least reason to consider him as any other than an enlightened pagan. In this point of view he is, therefore, to be contemplated; and by this standard impartial judgment will estimate his actions and character.

It seems that Mahomet, like the greatest philosophers of antiquity, clearly perceived the absurdity of the idolatrous worship of his own country, without being convinced of the Divine authority of any other system. This appears almost without a shadow of doubt, to have been the state of his religious ideas. On this principle, it is not in the least improbable that he might consider it as a meritorious act, to invent a system which might supersede that idolatrous religion, and establish the rational worship of one Supreme Being among the Arabians. It must be acknowledged, that Mahomedanism is infinitely preferable to Paganism, as it establishes the first and great fundamental principle of all rational religion, and

and the firmest support of morality, the belief of one God, and of a future state of reward and punishments. In this respect the prophet of Arabia shews himself superior to all the Pagan legislators. He estimates more justly the rationality of opinions, and the operation of motives. They amused the people with splendid festivals, pompous ceremonies, and material representations of ideal divinities, but considered the knowledge of the Supreme and universal Being, as theory useless to the multitude, and too sublime for vulgar conceptions. Mahomet, on the contrary, provided that the meanest of his followers should not be left ignorant of the fundamental principle of religion, and the most potent incentive to moral rectitude. Proceeding on these principles, it is highly probable that he might, without difficulty, reconcile his project with the dictates of his conscience, and persuade himself that in abolishing the idolatry of his country, and establishing a religion, that exhibits to the mind a rational view of the essence and attributes of the Supreme Being, he should accomplish an undertaking acceptable to God, and conducive to the happiness of man.

Divesting, therefore, our minds of those prepossessions naturally formed against a legislator, the successful propagation of whose system has been so detrimental to the Christian interest, we ought equally to avoid the extremes to which his friends and his enemies have carried their veneration and their abhorrence. Without revering him as a prophet, or detesting him as a profligate, impartial candour will perhaps observe in his character as much of the enthusiast, as of the impostor. The power of enthusiasm is wonderful, and difficult to calculate in its full extent. The mind,

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when its energy is incessantly bent to the same object, easily mistakes the warm suggestions of fancy, for the inspiration of Heaven, and the labour of thought expires in visionary rapture.* From enthusiasm to imposture, the step is short and easy. The history of mankind affords a multiplicity of proofs, that in the eyes of bigoted adherents to a particular system or party, either political or religious, enthusiasm can justify every measure, and sanctify every crime, that appears conducive to the interests of a favorite cause, or the accomplishment of a great design. Mahomet was conscious that he was imposing a feigned revelation on the credulity of mankind; but considering his system as an essential reform, he might think himself authorized to assume the title and character of a Divine missionary in order to sanction his proceedings, and obtain that ascendancy over the minds of his countrymen, which he perceived to be necessary to his success. This mode of proceeding is not peculiar to the Arabian legislator. It had been adopted by Lycurgus and Numa, and in a more recent period by Mango Capac in Peru, as well as by numbers of Christian fanatics. From these modes of reconciling conscience to fraud, in conjunction with ambitious or interested views, has proceeded all the train of forged miracles, and pious fictions, which have in all ages disgraced religion.

If Mahomet, even on the verge of eternity, asserted the truth of his mission, and in his last moments not only supported the dignity of a legislator, but displayed the firmness of a philosopher, and the calm

* History affords numerous proofs of this observation, and daily experience corroborates the evidence by a multiplicity of instances in our own times.

resignation

resignation of a saint, so remarkable a feature in the history of so extraordinary a man, can be ascribed only to the causes here considered, which have frequently produced similar effects, and confounded the champions of falshood with the martyrs of truth. In reasoning on these principles, it is not difficult to conceive that Mahomet might reconcile his conscience, by contemplating the rectitude of his intentions, and the merits of his cause. The enthusiasm by which he had been animated through life, might enable him, in his last moments, to maintain that tranquillity and composure of mind with which he is said to have expired, and which, if the circumstances of his exit be truly related, appear more consistent with the death of a saint, than with that of an impostor and blasphemer, conscious of guilt and apprehensive of punishment.

This enquiry into the character and conduct of a man, whose life has produced so extraordinary a revolution in human affairs, a man whom one half of Asia and Africa reveres as a prophet, and all Europe, except a single corner, abhors as an impostor, cannot seem uninteresting to the philosophical reader. The portrait, however, will perhaps appear too favorable, in the eyes of those whose minds are shackled by the prejudices of education, and who have never viewed him but in the dress in which he is generally exhibited by European writers.* It ought, however, to be considered, that if these prejudices did not exist, and that if we could separate our view of the man from a retrospect of the calamities which his

* If the Christians should think it too favorable, the Mahomedans would esteem it still more defective. Such is the power of prejudice. Of all the Christian writers, Gagnier is the most impartial.

successors,

successors, rather than himself, have brought upon the Christian world, we should not contemplate the prophet of Arabia in a more unfavorable light, than that in which we are accustomed to regard Lycurgus, Numa Pompilius, and other Pagan legislators, who stamped authority on their laws, by ascribing them to a Divine origin. Impartiality must confess that his system is superior to theirs, and it has acquired an extension to which none of theirs ever attained. In whatever light different nations, influenced by opposite prejudices, may view the prophet of Arabia, who by a wonderful train of events has become the legislator of a part of Europe, and so large a portion of Asia and Africa, all must perceive that he was one of those extraordinary personages, who, for reasons unknown to us, are at certain periods raised up by Divine Providence, to effect an important revolution in the state of mundane affairs.

In the unlimited indulgence of poligamy, which might have seemed to promise a numerous posterity, and the regular descent of his honours in lineal succession, Mahomet had not the happiness of placing a son on the prophetic and princely throne. All his sons had died in their infancy, and only one daughter, Fatima, survived her father. She was married to Ali, who being the cousin german, and nearest kinsman of the prophet, had, according to the laws of hereditary succession, a two-fold claim to the sacred throne. The aristocratical faction of the military chiefs, however, resolving to bestow the sceptre by election, the choice fell on Abubekar, the father of Ayesha, the most beloved of the wives of Mahomet. The first care of the new caliph, was to calm the intestine commotions of the rising empire. The death

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of Mahomet had been the signal of revolt to the Arabian tribes, and a new prophet had arisen in Arabia Felix, and placed himself at the head of a numerous body. His undisciplined troops, however, were unable to withstand the charge of Moslems, trained by Mahomet, and commanded by the intrepid Caled, lieutenant of his successor. The prophet, together with the greatest part of his army was slain; and the rebellious tribes of Arabia being destitute of an able chief, and acting without concert, were again compelled to submit to the power of the caliphate, and the laws of the koran.

Abubekar having re-established the unity of faith and government, immediately provided employment for the restless spirits of the Arabians, by exercising their valour in holy wars. Zeal for religion, and avidity of plunder, excited their courage, and victory confirmed their enthusiasm. Sirocs, the son of Chosrocs, enjoyed only eight months the crown of Persia. Various usurpers disputed the fragments of the monarchy, which after being exhausted by a long and ruinous foreign war, and now rent in pieces by intestine commotions, offered an easy prey to an aspiring conqueror.* The Caliph sent, in the first year of his reign, A.D. 632, the bands of the faithful both into Persia and Syria at once, the two empires of the east, which only four years before had been seen solely intent on each others destruction, without the most distant suspicion of danger from this new enemy. The short reign of this first successor of Mahomet, allowed little time for the extension of his empire. Having swayed the sceptre only two years, he died in a very advanced age, and was succeeded by Omar,

* Bibliotheque Oriental, tom. 3, p. 415, &c.

another

another of the faithful companions of the prophet. The reign of Omar was marked by the most signal successes. The Persians were totally defeated. In the year 637, the third after Omar's accession, Ctesiphon, the capital, was taken by assault, and the whole kingdom nearly subdued, although the conquest was not completed till the year 651, when the male issue of the Sassanides became extinct by the death of Yerdegered, the last of that royal race. While the Saracens were thus victorious in Persia, they were not less successful in Syria. Damascus had been captured in 634, and a bloody but decisive victory gained by the Arabians over the troops of Heraclius, the Greek emperor, on the banks of the Yermak, near the sea of Tiberias, prepared the way for the conquest of the whole country.* In 637, Jerusalem, after sustaining a siege of four months, obtained an honorable and advantageous capitulation; and in consideration of the sanctity of the place, Omar himself came from Medina to sign the articles.† In the ensuing year Aleppo and Antioch fell under the sceptre of the Arabs; the former being taken by assault, the latter surrendering on conditions. While the enemy was making so rapid a progress, the unaccountable inactivity of the emperor Heraclius, tarnished the glories of his Persian wars; and to his indolence, in all probability, the loss of Syria might in a great measure be attributed. After these repeated losses he gave up the contest, retired from the scene

* For the reign of Abubekar, see D'Herbelot Biblioth, p. 58. Reland. Palestine, tom. 1, p. 272. D'Anville Geog. ancienne, tom. 2, p. 185. Ockley, vol. 1, p. 241. It is impossible to give credit to his numbers.

† Ockley Hist. Sar. vol. 1, p. 250.

of action, and left the Arabians in the undisputed possession of that country.* All the places which till then had held out, submitted to the conqueror, and Syria was annexed to the empire of the caliphs, about 700 years after Pompey had reduced it to a Roman province. The reign of Omar was, with the Saracens, the age of conquest. In the year 638, Amron, his lieutenant, invaded Egypt; and in 641 the conquest of that country was completed by the capture of Alexandria. Omar fell by assassination, A.D. 644, in the tenth year of his reign, and was succeeded by Othman, who had been the secretary of Mahomet.† In his reign Persia was completely subdued, and the year 651 is marked by the extinction of the monarchy of the Sassanides, and the abolition of the religion of Zoroaster. The administration of Othman proving unsatisfactory, a general revolt was excited. After a siege of six weeks, Medina was taken, and the caliph was massacred by the rebels, who placed Ali, the husband of Fatima, on the throne. The succession by this means came into the family of Mahomet, near twenty-three years after his death.‡ But the seeds of a fatal discord were now deeply rooted in the empire of the Saracens. Moawiyah assumed the title of caliph, and his claim was supported by the troops of Syria and the house of Ommiyah. A bloody civil war ensued, in which Ali displayed the talents of a consummate general.§ He fell by the dagger of an assassin in the sixty-third year of his age, A.D. 661, the thirty-ninth of the Hegira. His son Hassan, un-

* Ockley Hist. Sar. vol. 1, p. 308, &c.

† For the reign of Omar, see D'Herbelot Biblioth. p. 686, &c.

‡ For the reign of Othman, ibid. p. 695, &c.

§ For the reign of Ali, ibid. p. 91.

able

able to contend with the usurper, retired to a private station. Moawiyah managed with such address the Arabian chiefs, that he changed the caliphate from an elective, to an hereditary empire, and transmitted the sceptre to his son Yerid. In the year 680, Hassan, the younger son of Ali, and of Fatima the daughter of Mahomet, made a last effort to recover the regal and sacerdotal sovereignty.* He fell in the contest, and the tombs of Ali and Hassan, are to this day objects of pious veneration to the pilgrims of Persia.† From that period the descendants of Mahomet and Ali, reduced to a subordinate station, have multiplied into a swarm of indigent sheiks, sheriffs, and emirs, who, however debased in fortune or character, boast the proud pre-eminence of their birth. These revolutions in the empire, produced a schism in the religion of the followers of Mahomet. The Tnrks recognized the legality of the succession as it actually took place in the caliphate.‡ The Persians, on the contrary, acknowledged Ali alone as the legitimate successor of the prophet; and after a lapse of 1175 years, this theological dispute, arising from a political circumstance, is perpetuated in the inextinguishable hatred which exists between the two nations.§ The Mahomedans imitating the example of Christians, have learned to fulminate anathemas, and under the pretext of faith, to stifle the precept of charity.

Having particularized the reigns of the first caliphs, Abubekar, Omar, Othman, Ali, and Moawiyah, a gene-

* Ockley Hist. Saracens, vol. 2, p. 170, &c.

† Niebuhr Voyage en Arabie, tom. 2, p. 210, &c.

‡ Reland de Relig. Moham. lib. 1. Ockley Hist. Sarac. tom. 2.

§ Chardin. tom. 2.

ral view of the subsequent state of the Arabian or Saracen empire is all that is further necessary. Persia, Syria, and Egypt, were not the limits of its conquests. Within ninety-one years after the flight of Mahomet from Mecca, his successors had subdued not only those countries, but Africa and Spain.* Their empire extended from the Indus to the Atlantic, and from the borders of Ethiopia to the Caspian Sea and the Pyrenées. The world had never before that period witnessed so rapid a career of conquest; never had one man inspired a nation with such enthusiastic valour. The circumstances of the Greek and Persian empire, however, were extremely favorable to the fanaticism of Arabia, which might otherwise perhaps have expired in her deserts. The caliphate, standing on the verge of two mighty empires exhausted by a fatal contest, rose on their ruins; and an uninterrupted series of successes kept up the enthusiasm, while it gratified the avarice of the conquerors. The first caliphs had been the companions of Mahomet. Formed by his instructions, and inspired with his enthusiasm, they had fought under his banners; but as they ascended the throne in an advanced age, they contented themselves with the exercise of the regal and sacerdotal functions, and entrusted the command of their armies to their lieutenants, most of whom had also been pupils and companions of the prophet. Among these, history commemorates the names and the actions of Seid, of Abu Obeidah; of Caled, surnamed the Sword of God; and of Amron the conqueror of Egypt; all of them distinguished by the most daring and enthusiastic courage. Within thirty-six years after the death

* Marian. de Rebus Hispan. tom. 1, lib. 6.—Cardonne Hist. de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne sous la domination des Arabes, tom. 1.

death of Mahomet, his disciples appeared in arms before Constantinople. In the year 668, the numerous fleet and army of the caliph Moawiyah, proceeding up the Hellespont, attacked that capital. But they had made an erroneous estimate of its strength and resources. Their attempt was unsuccessful. Retiring on the approach of winter to the isle of Cyzicus, in the Propontis, they renewed, during seven successive years, the assault of Constantinople, until their continual losses obliged them at last to relinquish the enterprize.* In 718 they again besieged the capital of the east, but with no better success. Their armies were repulsed, and their vessels destroyed, by the terrible effects of the Greek fire, to which the safety of Constantinople was probably to be ascribed. This extraordinary composition, which is said to have burned with the greatest vehemence in water, and to have been extinguishable only by sand, urine, or vinegar, was not only of a most terrific appearance, but of admirable use in destroying the fleet of an enemy. Its invention is ascribed to Callinicus, an engineer, either of Heliopolis in Egypt, or of a city of the same name in Syria. The art of preparing and directing this powerful agent was long kept a profound secret among the Greeks, but was at last, by some means, communicated to the Mahomedans, who used it with success against the croisaders, one of whom informs us, that it came flying through the air like a long-tailed dragon, as thick as a hogshead, with the report of thunder, and the velocity of lightning.† The mode of preparing it, however, remained unknown to the nations

* For the siege of Constantinople by the Saracens, see Ockley's Hist. of the Saracens, vol. 2, p. 127, &c.

† Joinville Hist. de St. Louis, p. 39.

of the west; and the art is now lost in the east, nor have the moderns ever been able to discover what were the ingredients of this mysterious composition, which the subsequent invention of gunpowder has now superseded.

The caliphate, hitherto powerful and united, began about the middle of the eighth century to feel the fatal effects of division, so common to widely extended empires. A destructive civil war took place between the houses of Abbas and Ommiyah.* Many thousands of the faithful were swept away in those quarrels between the successors of their prophet. The Abassides at length prevailed. Mervan, the fourteenth and last caliph of the Ommiades, fell in the contest; and eighty persons of that family, which had so long swayed the sceptre of the Saracen empire, were massacred at Damascus.† The dynasty of the Abassides was established A.D. 750, and the whole race of the Ommiades became the object of a bloody proscription. Of the princes of that house, Abdalrahman alone escaped the general destruction; and after having eluded the diligent search of his enemies, found a favorable reception among the Arabians of Spain, where he erected the standard of revolt against the house of Abbas, and established an independent caliphate, engaged in perpetual hostility with that of the east.‡ The Fatimites of Africa and Egypt soon after-

* It may not be amiss to remind the reader, that of the three great Arabian families, who claimed the succession to the caliphate, the Ommiades were the family of the caliph, Omar; the Abassides were the descendants of Abbas, the uncle of the prophet; and the Fatimites were the posterity of Fatima, his daughter, already mentioned as the wife of the caliph, Ali.

† D'Herbelot, Biblioth. Orient. articles Ommiades, Abassides, &c.

‡ See Hist. View of Spain.

wards

wards followed the example; and the caliphate of the Arabians was split into three separate and hostile empires.

Damascus had been the metropolis of the caliphate ever since Moawiyah removed the throne of the prophet from Medina. A new dynasty made choice of a new capital; and in the year 762, Almansor, the second caliph of the race of the Abassides, laid the foundations of Bagdad on the eastern bank of the Tigris, a city which almost vied with Constantinople itself in extent and magnificence. The most prominent features of the subsequent history of the caliphate, are its frequent wars with the Greek empire. Harun Al Raschid, the contemporary of Charlemagne, was the most powerful of the caliphs that sat on the throne of Bagdad.* During his reign, and that of Almamon, his son, the house of Abbas was in the meridian of its greatness. In the beginning of the tenth century, a singular revolution shook the caliphate to its foundation; and a spirit of fanaticism, similar to that which gave it existence, threatened its downfal. About A.D. 890, an Arabian preacher, assuming the titles of representative of Mahomet and herald of the Messiah, disclaimed the authority of the house of Abbas; and two rebellious imaums, putting themselves at the head of above 100,000 desperate enthusiasts, subdued all the territory adjacent to the Persian Gulph, plundered Bussora and several other cities, and filled Bagdad itself with consternation. In the year 929, they attacked, during the festival, the holy city of Mecca, took it by assault, and put to the sword a prodigious number of citizens and pilgrims. Those fanatics

* Vide D'Herbelot Biblioth. Orientale, under the article Harun Al Raschid.

trampling on the institutions of the prophet, tore the sacred veil from the kaaba, and entirely defaced that sacred house.* Through superstition or avarice, however, they opened the pilgrimage of Mecca. They were at length reduced; but after this commotion the caliphs of Bagdad seem to have had only a precarious sway over Arabia. Their authority was, in process of time, not less weakened in other parts of the empire. The viceroys or governors of provinces usurped the sovereign power, acknowledging only a nominal allegiance to the caliph; and the vast empire of the Arabians, presented a picture similar to that of France at the accession of Hugh Capet. Every day it became more confused; and the successor of Mahomet could scarcely be distinguished among the number of subordinate powers. About the middle of the tenth century, the revolt of the provinces had nearly circumscribed the dominions of the caliph within the walls of Bagdad, where his precarious title was supported by Turkish and other foreign mercenaries. During this declining state of the caliphate, the Greek emperors, Nicephorus, Phocas and John Zimisces, recovered Antioch and several other cities of Syria. The latter of these princes advanced beyond the Euphrates and threatened Bagdad. The helpless successors of Mahomet, without power, without arms, and without revenues, all which had been torn from their hand by traitors and rebels, were unable to resist an invader. During the space of nearly two centuries, the caliphs appeared as venerable phantoms in the palace of Bagdad, assuming the titles of successor of Mahomet and commander of the faithful, while their vast empire was in the hands of their revolted subjects, who pretended

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. ch. 52, and the authorities there adduced.

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to revere their spiritual, but rejected their temporal authority. The Fatimite caliphs of Egypt, at last, rising on the ruins of the Abassides, almost extinguished the spiritual as well as the temporal power of the pontiff of Bagdad. From this time the vast empire of the Arabians was rent with such multiplied factions, agitated with so many and so violent commotions, and divided into so many different states, successively rising and falling, that it would require several volumes of history to trace the several dynasties, and follow them through their various revolutions. These, indeed, as they exhibit little else than a chaos of crimes and calamities, would afford little entertainment to a modern reader. It is requisite, however, to observe, that after the caliphs had long been no more than mere pageants of state in the palace of Bagdad, the Tartars annihilated the last remains of their nominal sovereignty. About the year 1258, Mangou Khan, or rather Hologau, his brother and general of his army, took the city of Bagdad, put to death Motassem, the last of the Abassides, and totally extinguished the caliphate.* The rise and fall of those dynasties which ruled over Africa and Egypt, will be recorded in the history of those countries.† The history of the Fatimite caliphs and of the Mamalukes of Egypt, will involve the principal transactions of Syria, which after

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 11, p. 416. Anderson notices this event, but with a difference of names. He ascribes the capture of Bagdad and the extermination of the caliphate, to Haalon, the Tartar king of Persia, placed on that throne by Hologau, or, as he calls him, Hocatou Khan. The variation of names causes great confusion in Oriental history, and that of the Tartars, in particular, is extremely obscure. See Anderson's Royal Geneal. tab. 151.

† A chronological account of those may be seen in Anderson's Royal Genealogies. But their history would here be tedious and uninteresting.

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the fall of the caliphate of Bagdad, was generally an appendage to the Egyptian kingdom. The desultory enterprizes of the croisaders, which, at different intervals, agitated, during the space of almost two centuries, both Europe and Asia, but produced no permanent effects in the countries that were the object of these pious and romantic expeditions. The Christians, indeed, in the year 1099, captured Jerusalem and established there a kingdom, which, however, they had not the good fortune to keep. They also made themselves masters of Antioch, the ancient capital of the Macedonian kings of Syria, which they erected into a separate principality. The Christian kingdom of Jerusalem terminated on the 2nd of October, 1187, when that city was taken by Saladin, who had seized the sovereignty of Egypt and extinguished the power of the Fatimites. About the end of the third century, Ptolemais was taken by Kalil Aseraf, the Mamaluke sultan of Egypt; and the Europeans were finally expelled from Syria. The transactions of the Turks are here purposely omitted, as their progress has been more distinctly marked in a separate view of that people. They had long been masters of Asia Minor, but the crescent had been displayed on the walls of Constantinople before Sultan Selim II. extended his dominion over Syria, which, till A.D. 1516, remained subject to the Mamaluke sultans of Egypt. At that period the Asiatic dominions of Turkey assumed their present form and extent. After this, it will not be amiss to remind the reader, that the power of the Arabians being first weakened by their intestine divisions, and the revolt of ambitious leaders, against the legitimate authority of the caliphs, was finally extinguished by the Turks in Asia, by the Mamalukes in Egypt, by the

defection

defection of governors and commanders in Africa, and in Spain by the long constant efforts of the Christians, who, after successive, or rather continual wars, during the space of near 800 years, accomplished their object by the conquest of Grenada, in the joint reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. Since that time, the formerly victorious Arabians, whom their conquests have transplanted into so many different countries, are only wandering tribes in a state of subjection to the Turks, while those who remain in their ancient seats are governed by petty princes, and have relapsed into their former barbarous condition. The descendants of Mahomet himself, though still venerated by the people and honoured with the appellations of sheiks, sheriffs, or emirs, are for the most part extremely poor, and are found in all the various conditions of princes, nobles, doctors, merchants, and beggars.*

In every point of view the history of the Arabians forms a distinguished feature in that of mankind. Impelled by the daring genius and singular views of one extraordinary man, they emerged from their obscure deserts, where, from ages immemorial, they had remained unnoticed and almost unknown. Bursting on the world like a meteor, advancing in every direction with incredible velocity, discipline and tactics were unable to resist their enthusiastic valour. The lapse of a single century produced a total change in their national character. They could no longer be considered as a distinct people. Like the Romans, after the time of the republic, their blood was mixed with that of their captives and subjects; and the Saracens were only a heterogeneous mass composed of all the nations which they had conquered. Greeks, Persians,

* Gibbon, vol. 9, p. 348, and Browne's Trav. p. 442.

Syrians, Egyptians, and the various tribes of northern Africa; all, in fine, who had embraced Islamism, and ranged themselves under the banners of the prophet, were confounded in one common appellation. The vast empire of the caliphs was, about the middle of the eighth century, split into three separate and independent monarchies. The age of barbarism, of rapine, and conquest was terminated; the age of civilization and science succeeded; and the savages of the desert, after having astonished the world by their valour, enlightened it by their studies. The lives and manners of the first caliphs were remarkable for their simplicity. Their dress was coarse and plain, their fare homely, and what modern luxury would call poor. It consisted chiefly of bread and fruits, with little animal food; and water was their wholesome beverage. The frugal meal was sanctified by prayer; and accompanied with religious exhortations when the courtiers and officers were present. The mighty Omar, when he went from Medina to Jerusalem, to sign the capitulation and receive the surrender of that city, was mounted on a camel, and carried with a bag of corn, and another of dates, with a wooden dish and a leathern bottle full of water.* Such was the humble equipage and simple provision of the most powerful monarch at that time upon earth. Such was the manner in which the first caliphs shewed their contempt for the pomp and pageantry of Persia and Constantinople, and their disregard of the things of this world. The simplicity of the court of Medina, however, was in a great measure laid aside in the palace of Damascus. But after the accession of the Abassides, the imperial residence of Bagdad rivalled the ancient

* Ockley's Hist. Saracens, vol. 1, ubi supra.

splendor of Persia, and equalled all that has been recorded of Oriental magnificence.* Opulence and splendor were accompanied with arts, commerce, and letters. These, as well as Oriental pomp, were about the time of the building of Bagdad, A.D. 762, introduced by Almansor, and promoted with ardour by Harun Al Raschid, Almamon, and successive caliphs. The Ommiades of Spain vied with the Abassides on the banks of the Tigris in their advancement of learning and their taste for magnificence. The age of Arabian literature commenced about the middle of the eighth, and continued till about the middle of the thirteenth century, coinciding with the darkest period of European ignorance. The sciences of medicine, chemistry, astronomy, logic, and algebra, are those in which the Arabians chiefly excelled, and to them Europe is indebted for the invention, or at least the introduction of the cyphers now used in arithmetic, and so excellently calculated to facilitate its operations. Ancient history seems not to have greatly excited their curiosity. They suffered the heroes of Greece and Rome to rest in oblivion. General and partial histories, of their own nation and age, were produced in abundance by the Arabian writers; but their historians paid little attention to the affairs of the world, which had been transacted previous to the time of Mahomet. Under the despotic government of the caliphate, rhetoric was useless. The poets of Greece and Rome would naturally excite the abhorrence of the Arabians; and it could scarcely be expected that the commanders of the faithful should encourage, or the followers of the prophet should cultivate, the study

* For the magnificence of the caliphs of Bagdad in the tenth century, see D'Herbelot. Biblioth. p 589, &c.

of

of their profane mythology. Their architecture was remarkable for expensive and splendid magnificence, rather than just proportion and elegant symmetry. Sculpture and painting were condemned by the koran, and could not flourish in the empire of the caliphs. A variety of circumstances concur to form the genius and character of nations. The Arabians, though scarcely known in the annals of warfare, were far from being destitute of personal courage. Like other semi-barbarians, their valour had been constantly exercised in the mutual and unceasing hostilities of their distinct tribes.* Concord alone was wanted to render them formidable to foreigners. Their union was at last effected by the sagacious policy of their prophet. Religion was the political and social bond which united the Arabians. Enthusiasm was their stimulus to great enterprises and extraordinary acts of valour. The debilitated state of the two great empires of Constantinople and Persia, afforded to that sudden and extraordinary impulse, a favorable opportunity of exertion. The first caliphs and their lieutenants, formed by the instructions and animated by the views of the prophet, kept up among the people the same enthusiam which he had inspired. The caliphs, assuming and supporting the character of successors and representatives of Mahomet, kept alive by their public exhortations, the zeal and enthusiasm of their subjects. As the first ministers of religion and commanders of the faithful, they united in their own persons all spiritual and temporal power; and an unbounded veneration for their high character and dignity, for some time, maintained in one compact system, the vast ex-

* Gibbon, vol. 9, p. 238, and D'Herbelot. Bib. Orient. p. 75, &c. on whom Gibbon rests his authority.

tent of the Arabian empire. But when the caliphate was split into different divisions; when the throne of Mahomet became the prize of contention and the seat of usurpation, the persons of the caliphs became less venerable, and their authority less respected. The empire of the Arabians, though divided into the three distinct caliphates of Asia, Egypt, and Spain, continued some time to display an extraordinary splendor, and to flourish in commerce, in letters, and science. But the political and religious schism was followed by a long train of insubordination, which undermined the foundations of this immense empire, and caused it gradually to moulder away and sink under the assaults of the Turks, the Mamalukes, and the Spaniards. The power, the wealth, the magnificence, and the learning of the Arabians, at last totally disappeared. No nation ever rose so rapidly to eminence, and none ever sunk more completely into its primitive obscurity.

ARABIA.

CHAP. I.

Situation—Extent—Boundaries—Face of the Country—Mountains—Rivers—Mineralogy—Soil—Climate—Vegetable Productions—Zoology—Natural Curiosities, Antiquities, &c.

ARABIA is situated between 12° and 34° north latitude, and in its oblique position, its north-west corner may be fixed about 35° of east longitude; while Cape Rasalgate, the south-eastern extremity, is in 60° 3' east longitude.

Boundaries.]—On the south-west, the south-east, and the north-east, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulph, form natural boundaries. On the north and north-west, towards Syria, the limits are not ascertained with precision.

Face of the country.]—The greatest part of the country consists of vast deserts, interspersed like those of Africa, with fertile oases. Adopting the divisions of the ancient geographers, that part on the borders of Egypt and Syria, denominated Petrea, presents a rugged surface of granitic rocks, the north-eastern and central parts, distinguished by the appellation of deserta, or the desert, have an aspect corresponding with the name; but Arabia Fœlix, the southern angle, bordering on the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, has a beautiful, diversified, and fertile appearance.

Moun-

Mountains.]—The mountains of Arabia are numerous, but of no great elevation. The highest appear in Yemen Yanan, the ancient Arabia Fœlix: those of the desert are merely sand-stone hills. Among the granitic rocks of Arabia Petrea, or the stony Arabia, Mount Sinai is distinguished by the promulgation of the Mosaical law.

Rivers.]—Arabia may be considered in a great measure as destitute of rivers, those which are delineated in maps being little better than rivulets, which acquire some magnitude during the rains.* In the whole extent of Arabia, if we except the Euphrates and the Schat-El-Arab, formed by its junction with the Tigris, there is not, in the whole extent of Arabia, a single river that can answer any purpose of navigation. Lakes are equally rare in this country.

Mineralogy.]—The mineralogy is of little importance, presenting neither gold nor silver; and the iron is neither abundant nor of a good quality. There are some lead mines in the province of Omon, near the Persian Gulph.

Soil.]—The soil of Yemen has not been particularly described, but it appears to be generally fertile. The great central desert is entirely sand, if we except a few fertile specks of ground, which afford pasture to the flocks of the Bedouins. Arabia Petrea, as already observed, has a stony soil. The climate throughout Arabia is extremely hot. In Yemen, the ancient Arabia Fœlix, it appears to be more temperate than in the interior, being cooled by the humid breezes from the sea. The mountainous parts of this province have a regular rainy season, from about Midsummer to the middle of September. At Muscat,

* Niebuhr, p. 296.

the

the rainy season commences in the middle of November, and ends about the middle of February.—In general, the rainy season varies in the different parts of the country, and Yemen seems to lie in different climates. During the dry season, there is always a serene sky, and a cloud is scarcely ever to be seen.* In the deserts along the Persian Gulph and the Schat-El-Arab, the heats are excessive, and must be equally so in the central parts. A late traveller says, that nothing but experience can enable a stranger to the country to form any idea of the heat upon the desert†.

Vegetable productions.]—The agricultural productions of Arabia are chiefly wheat, maize, barley, lentils, &c. Rice is seldom seen, and oats are unknown. Tobacco, as well as the sugar cane and cotton, are objects of cultivation. The chief exertion of agricultural industry, consists in irrigating the grounds; and this, wherever it is easily practicable, produces a luxuriant vegetation: but the scarcity of rivers, lakes, and brooks, in most parts of the country, diffuse an aspect of sterility over the Arabian landscape.‡ The fertile parts of the country abound in dates, pomegranates, oranges, lemons, and other excellent fruits.§ Cinnamon, cloves, cassia, pepper, cardamums, spikenard, and the best frankincense, being formerly brought from India to Arabia, and from thence by the way of Egypt to Europe, these valuable spices were supposed to be the products of Arabia, which, from

* Niebuhr's Description d' l'Arabie, p. 4.

† Jackson's Journey from India, p. 16.

‡ The same author speaks very highly of the extreme fertility of the country near Bussora, which is watered by numerous canals, ib. p. 26—28.

§ Jackson's Journey, p. 25.—Nieb. Descrip. p. 144, &c.

this

this circumstance, derived the name of Fœlix, or happy. But the extension of European navigation and commerce has traced those rich productions to their original source, and discovered them to be natives of India, and the oriental isles. Arabia Fœlix, or Yemen, however, affords myrrh, aloes,* and frankincense, of an inferior kind; and two valuable productions, coffee, the best in the world, and the fragrant and costly balm of Mecca, are her peculiar boast. Arabia is destitute of forests; but groves of dates, sycamores, &c. as well as scattered trees, appear among the mountains. The general aspect of the country is that of a vast central desert, interspersed with a few fruitful spots, and skirted with a pleasant and fertile border; but a striking deficiency of wood and water is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Arabian landscape.

Zoology.]—Every one knows that the horse is the glory and pride of the Arabian zoology. The horses are divided into two classes, the Kadishi, and the Kochlani, or the common and the noble breed. The latter are reared with the greatest attention, and the genealogy is carefully preserved, the Arabians pretending to trace the pedigree of the breed to the stalls of Solomon. The Arabian steeds are frequently purchased by the English at Mocha; and the prices are often excessively high. The camel and the dromedary may be considered as the most useful among the Arabian animals, being by the Author of Nature peculiarly adapted to the nature of this country and Africa, as by the expansion of the feet, and the faculty of bearing hunger, thirst, and fatigue, these two species of quadrupeds are enabled to traverse the sandy

* The best aloes are produced in the island of Socotra.

sandy deserts, which would otherwise have remained for ever unpassable.* This country also possesses a superior breed of asses, which are sold at high prices. The state of the horned cattle and sheep has not been illustrated; but from the nature of the country they cannot be supposed to possess any great degree of perfection. There are various kinds of wild animals, as jackals, hyenas, monkies, wolves, foxes, panthers, &c. There are ostriches in the desert, and various birds of prey, as eagles, vultures, &c. in the mountains. Locusts are exceedingly numerous, and some kinds of them are esteemed an excellent food.

Curiosities and antiquities.]—The knowledge which Europeans have acquired of Arabia being almost wholly confined to Yemen, and the other outskirts of the country, the interior may present natural curiosities yet unknown; but none that are remarkably striking appear in those parts, which have already been explored; and as the Arabians never erected any magnificent edifices till the time of the caliphs, when the seat of empire was removed from Medina to Damascus, and afterwards to Bagdad, remains of ancient grandeur are not to be expected. The kaaba, or holy house of Mecca, is the principal monument of Arabian antiquity.

* The dromedary is distinguished from the camel in having one bunch on the back, by being of a lighter make, and by the superior quickness of its pace. Nieb, p. 143, &c.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Chief Cities and Towns—Edifices.—Islands.

THIS chapter presenting little matter of importance will necessarily be short. The two most celebrated cities, Mecca and Medina, being sacred ground, which no infidel is permitted to approach, we can derive no information concerning these sancta santorum of the Mahomedan world, but from the inaccurate and exaggerated accounts of oriental writers. On such authorities, or on that of vague report, Denon seems to have founded his estimate, when he represented the population of Mecca at 120,000 souls.* Gibbon, with greater probability, says, that in its most flourishing periods, Mecca has not exceeded " the size and population of Marseilles" :† and he observes, that some latent motive, perhaps of superstition, must have actuated the founders in the choice of so unpromising a situation, a narrow plain, at the foot of three barren mountains, in a rocky soil, without any pasturage or cultivated land near the city, and destitute even of the conveniency of good water. Mecca has, indeed, from time immemorial, been an object of religious veneration; and possessing no agricultural resources, but depending on distant supplies for the subsistence of its inhabitants, has, in all ages, owed

* Denon's Trav. in Egypt, vol. 2. p. 227.

† Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 9. p. 227.

its wealth and importance to fanaticism and commerce. The historian of the decline of the Roman empire, before he brings the Arabians on the theatre of action, gives a florid description of its trade and importance, at the time when Mahomet commenced his mission.* And if we consider the subsequent extension of his religion, the power and opulence of its professors, with the numerous pilgrimages and rich caravans, which, for the two-fold purpose of devotion and trade, have, during so many ages, resorted to Mecca from all parts of the Mahomedan world, it is reasonable to conclude that the wealth and population of the holy city must, since that period, have greatly increased. The famous kaaba, or holy house, or house of God, which was prior to the age of Mahomet, and has ever since been the grand object of Moslem veneration, is described as a small square edifice, destitute of all architectural beauty, standing in the middle of an open square, which is encompassed with a colonnade, and ornamented with minarets, and contains several oratories, or chapels, within its inclosure. In the kaaba, is seen a black stone, which was probably an early object of Arabian veneration. Mecca is situated in 21° 40′ north latitude, and in 41° east longitude, somewhat less than forty miles from the shores of the Red Sea. According to the report of the Mahomedan pilgrims, it is well built of stone; but of its population, and other interesting circumstances, there are no authentic details. The government is vested in a shereef, whose revenue is greatly increased by the donations of Mahomedan princes.

Medina.]—Medina is situated about 200 miles to the north of Mecca, and as well as the latter, at about

* Gibbon ubi supra.

a day's

a day's journey from the Red Sea. It was the first metropolis of the empire of the caliphs, but is now described as only a small town, remarkable for nothing but the tomb of Mahomet. On this account it is a sacred place, and partakes with Mecca in the veneration of pilgrims; but the latter city appears to be the centre of that extensive and lucrative commerce, which has, during so many ages, been carried on in a situation apparently so unfavorable. From what has been said, it may be easily perceived, that the splendor of the holy city depends on the prosperity of Mahomedanism, and may probably have been in a state of decline during the greatest part of the last century. Mecca is a point of contact between Constantinople, Africa, and India, and likewise, as Denon observes, an abyss, which continually draws into its vortex, the gold of the Mahomedan countries. The invasion of Egypt by the French, and their subsequent irruption into Syria, was a dreadful blow to its prosperity. The regular arrival of caravans from Constantinople, Asia Minor, and Africa, having been interrupted during the years 1798 and 1799, those from the east could find nothing to barter for their commodities, and the trade of Mecca must have suffered almost a temporary annihilation. This was so severely felt by the Meccans, that they were impelled, perhaps more by interest, than zeal for the religion of the prophet, to engage in the war. A body of men, named the volunteers of Mecca, was sent into Egypt in order to assist in expelling the French.* But Arabian valour was not a match for European tactics, and the Meccans being all killed or dispersed, their expedition produced no effect.

* Denon's Trav. in Egypt, vol. 2, p. 228, &c.

Sana.]—The chief city of Yemen is Sana, which is not above four miles in circuit; and part of its area being occupied by gardens, it cannot contain a very numerous population. It is encompassed with a wall of brick, and has several palaces of brick and stone, but the houses of the common people are built of bricks dried in the sun.* In this city are several caravanseras for merchants and travellers.

Jedda.]—Jedda or Judda, is of consequence only as being the sea port of Mecca, from which it is about forty miles distant.

Mocha.]—Mocha is a port considerably frequented by English ships from Hindoostan.

Moschat.]—Moschat has an excellent harbour, and is the most considerable town in the province of Omon, having been from early times a mart of commerce between Arabia, Persia, and India.

Bussora.]—Bussora, although an Arabian city, and beyond comparison the most commercial in the whole country, being subject to the Ottoman Porte, is described under the article of Asiatic Turkey.

Edifices.]—The edifices can scarcely furnish matter for a separate article. The kaaba of Mecca, which owes its celebrity not to any architectural beauties, but solely to Mahomedan veneration, holds the first rank; and the second is claimed by the mosque at Medina, which is said to be constructed on a similar plan. No mention is made of any others that are worthy of notice.

Islands.]—Bahrin, celebrated for its pearl fishery, is the only Arabian island of importance.

Socotra.]—Socotra, famous for its aloes, though in-

* Nieb. Descrip. de l'Arabie, p. 201.

habited

habited by a colony of Arabians, is by proximity of situation an African island.

After delineating this necessarily imperfect sketch of a country so celebrated, but so little known, it may not be amiss to observe, that all our accounts of its topography and principal towns, are extremely defective.* The descriptions of the Danish traveller, are chiefly confined to Yemen, and no European has explored the interior. But it is most of all to be regretted, that the perpetual exclusion of unbelievers from the holy cities of Medina and Mecca, especially the latter, which has so long been the celebrated centre of pilgrimage and commerce, renders it impossible to obtain any precise knowledge of the most interesting feature of Arabia.

* In order to be convinced how imperfectly Arabia is known, compare Niebuhr's descriptions with D'Anville's map, and observe the disagreements.

HISTORY.

I SHALL not here compose a separate chapter on the history of the Arabians; its conspicuous part has already been related. Until the time of Mahomet, it is buried in deep obscurity, and both before that period, and after the full dissolution of the caliphate, is devoid of importance or interest. During that luminous and splendid period, when the Arabians ruled from the Indus to the Atlantic, and from the Caspian Sea to the borders of Ethiopia, they were a people transplanted from their own country, and mixed with many others whom they had conquered. The seat of their empire was transferred from Medina to Damascus, and afterwards to Bagdad. Arabia thus abandoned, became a distant and obscure province of the caliphate; the natives bore no conspicuous part in the transactions of that mighty empire, nor had scarcely any share in that extensive dominion, which the Arabian race exercised over so great a part of the globe. The history of the caliphate, the most brilliant and important, as well as the most luminous portion of the Arabian annals, is, therefore, comprised in that of Asiatic Turkey, where the seat of their empire was fixed. On its dissolution, Arabia split into numerous petty principalities, the state in which it had been from ages immemorial, until Mahomet reduced its different tribes under his own dominion, and laid the foundation of that which became the

scourge

scourge and the wonder of the world. In this state the country still remains, and its history during the last six centuries is uninteresting. A modern event has, indeed, attracted some attention. About the year 1731, a new religion made its appearance, and has since that time occasioned great commotions. The founder was Mahomet Ibn Abd-ul-Wahib, a learned Arabian, who had studied at Bagdad, Damascus, and Mosul, and had been forced to flee successively from these places on account of his heterodox opinions. His system appears to be a jumble of Mahomedanism and Deism, its principal tenets being, that all human homage ought to be paid to one God alone, and that any veneration of a deceased prophet, is absurd and idolatrous; that all addresses to the Deity, ought to be offered up under the open canopy of Heaven, and that all mosques and other places of worship ought to be destroyed. It rejects the Divine authority of the koran, and condemns pilgrimage, but retains the other four dogmata of Mahomet, alms, fasting, prayer, and ablution, and prohibits the use of all liquors but water. Mahomet Ibn Abd-ul-Wahib dying about the year 1792, at more than 100 years of age, was succeeded by his son Hussein, and since that time the sect has become formidable. Their principal station is at Deraye, in a mountainous district in the heart of Arabia, where they bid defiance both to the shereef of Mecca, and the pacha of Bagdad, while the neighbouring countries are exposed to the rapid incursions of their numerous dromedaries. Perpetual war against all who dissent from their doctrines, is considered as a positive duty; and their mode of distributing the spoils, and of levying imposts for the public expenditure, is said to be calculated

for a system of proselytism. But according to Mr. Browne's account, they do not seem to act on extensive views, or appear likely to produce any important revolution.*

Two interesting observations may here be made on the history of the Arabians. It has often been remarked, that while the annals of perhaps all other nations record instances of their subjugation, those of the Arabians exhibit their perpetual independence and their victories. But this can only be understood of the interior country. Yemen has been repeatedly subdued by the Abyssinians, the Persians, and the Turks. The provinces near the Euphrates, have also at different times been subject to foreigners; and Bussora, with the adjacent country, at present acknowledges the authority of the grand seignior. The perpetual independence of Arabia, therefore, can only be partially understood, and the term must be confined to central regions.† These wide inland countries, almost equal to both France and Spain in extent, surrounded and intersected by arid deserts, have ever defied all foreign invasion. Neither the Babylonian, the Persian, the Macedonian, the Roman, nor the Ottoman conquerors, have ever been able to penetrate into those sequestered retreats, where the aboriginal Arabians bid defiance to the united power of the world.

The second observation here to be made, is on the Arabian discoveries and settlements on the coasts of Africa,

* The account of this new sect is taken from Niebuhr, p. 298, 299, &c. and from Browne's Trav. p. 446, &c. These two authors do not perfectly agree; Browne's is the latest account; he received it from the Arabs, who conducted the caravans from Bussora, and from the merchants of Aleppo and Damascus.

† Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp, vol. 9, p. 229.

Africa, Madagascar, and India. When the Portugueze discovered those countries, they found all the eastern coasts of Africa, as far as Mosambique, and the coast of Malabar in India, almost to Cape Comoron, peopled by Arabian colonies, and governed by princes of that nation. We can trace the Arabian population of Egypt, and the north of Africa, from the migrations occasioned by war and conquest during the victorious ages of the caliphate, and ascertain the æras of its introduction; but history furnishes no authentic accounts of their maritime conquests and colonizations, nor any certain indication of the period of time in which they took place. They appear, however, to have been effected at different periods. Abyssinia has undoubtedly, and Egypt has probably, been first peopled by Arabian colonies, but these events belong to remote antiquity. The present Arabian population of Egypt, was introduced under the first successors of Mahomet; and the colonies on the African and Indian coasts being all Mahomedan, evidently date their establishment from the same or a later period. But whether these maritime adventures were undertaken by the Arabians in the flourishing ages of their empire, or whether they took place after the downfal of the caliphate, and in consequence of the commotions which followed its dissolution, is a doubtful question of which the solution remains a desideratum in history.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Present State, political and moral — Religion — Government — Laws — Army—Navy—Revenues—Commerce— Manufactures—Population—Political importance—Language—Literature —Education — Manners and Customs—National character.

Religion.]—IT is scarcely necessary to observe, that the religion of Arabia is Mahomedanism, of which this country is celebrated as the cradle. It is divided into different sects, of which the chief are the Sunnite followed by the Turks, the Zeidite, which seems to be more lax both in doctrines and practice, as well as more tolerant, and that of the Wahebites, whose principal tenets have already been particularized.

It may here be remarked, that Arabia and the neighbouring country of Syria, have given birth to the three chief religions that have swayed the opinions of mankind, and together with Egypt have, both under Christianity and Mahomedanism, been the distinguished sources of new sects and theological systems.

Government and Laws.]—Arabia is divided among numerous imaums and sheiks, whose government, both in form and practice, seems to be nearly the same. The title of imaum is ecclesiastical, signifying vicar, that is of Mahomet. Among the Turks it denotes a common priest, who reads prayers in the mosque; but in Arabia the word is considered as synonimous with

with caliph, or commander of the faithful. The sovereigns of Yemen sometimes celebrate divine service, and are styled imaums; but on their coins they assume the title of emir, or descendants of the prophet. The throne is hereditary, and the prince acknowledges no superior, either in spiritual or temporal affairs; but cannot be called despotic, as he governs according to the laws of the koran, and cannot condemn even a Christian, a Jew, or a Pagan to death, without a legal trial.* As in other Mahomedan countries, the koran, with its commentaries, is the only code of law, as well as of theology. The tribes of the interior are governed by chiefs, distinguished by the title of shiek, which seems to be merely secular, and but rarely united with the ecclesiastical character.

These petty princes being commonly at war with one another, their incessant hostilities render the country a scene of confusion, which affords no security to travellers, who would be plundered by one Arabian chief, where it only to prevent another from being enriched by their spoils.†

Army.]—The army of Yemen is in time of peace inconsiderable, being stated only at about 4000 infantry, and 1000 cavalry, ill armed and without uniforms. The navy is of still less importance, and their vessels are rudely constructed.‡ No approximate computation can be made of the military force which Arabia, if united under one monarch might raise, as no documents exist that can enable us to form an estimate of its population. The armies of Sabeans

* For the government of Yemen, see Niebuhr, p. 162, &c.

† Niebuhr, p. 296, &c,

‡ Mr. Jackson saw a vessel belonging to the imaum of Muskat, which carried not less than 1000 men. Journey from India, p. 8.

and Ethiopians, which at different times invaded the territories of Judah, were undoubtedly Arabians, as it can scarcely be supposed that those immense bodies of men had marched from the distant regions of Africa to Palestine. In the time of Mahomet and Omar, Arabia poured formidable armies into Syria, Egypt, and Persia; and a numerous Arabian population mixed itself with the original inhabitants of the conquered countries.* These circumstances afford reason to believe, that the interior parts of this country have at all times been the seat of a more considerable population, than appears to correspond with our ideas of a country composed for the most part of arid and sandy deserts. But according to the best accounts of those central and unexplored regions that can be collected, there are many fertile spots, filled with numerous villages, and small towns governed by independent sheiks.† And if we further consider the universal temperance of the Arabians, who eat little meat, who drink only water or coffee, and wear little clothing, whose luxuries require no consumption of grain in breweries or distilleries; if, in fine, we consider that on an average calculation, one Englishman consumes as much of the produce of the earth as three Arabians, it is no improbable conjecture, that these immense regions, which, as already observed, are little inferior to both France and Spain in extent, may contain a larger portion of the human race than a superficial investigator of circumstances would be inclined to suppose. It may not be amiss to compare these

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 9, and the authorities there quoted.

† Niebuhr, p. 296. It must be observed, that the Danish traveller's description is founded on report. Neither he, nor any other European, ever penetrated into the central regions of Arabia.

observations with those of Barrow and Staunton on the population of China.*

Political relations, importance, and revenues.]—Arabia, in its divided state, cannot present any ideas of political relations or importance, and were it even united under one sovereign, as in the days of Mahomet, nothing could be inferred from the events of that period, which were produced by an extraordinary impulse of enthusiasm artificially excited, and contrary to the common course of things. Of the national revenue of a country like Arabia, it is almost superfluous to remark, that nothing can be said with any degree of precision, or even of probability.

Commerce.]—All historical evidence concurs to shew, that the commerce of Arabia was formerly important. Before the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope to India, the Arabians had, from time immemorial, possessed a considerable share in the trade carried on between the Oriental countries and Europe.† The commerce of this country with Egypt, conducted as at present by caravans, is the first instance of foreign trade recorded in history, and perhaps the first that existed. The traffic carried on by the caravans at Mecca, has already been mentioned. But the Arabian intercourse with India has greatly declined since the discoveries of the Portugueze, which have enabled the Europeans to carry on a direct trade with the Oriental regions of Asia. The chief native exports of Arabia, are coffee, aloes, and myrrh, with an inferior kind of frankincense, and

* Barrow's China, p. 577. Sir Geo. Staunton, p. 3.

† Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 9, p. 227. Pliny, vol. 6, cap. 32.

some

some other drugs; and the imports are the different metals, with various kinds of European manufactures, especially in iron, steel, and glass.

Manufactures.]—The manufactures of Arabia are of little importance. In Yemen, all the works in gold and silver, and even the coins, are the production of Jewish manufactories. There are some manufactures of coarse linen; but woollens are too warm for the climate. Some muskets of very indifferent workmanship, are also made in the country, and there is a glasshouse at Mocha.

Language.]—The Arabic language has always been celebrated as exceedingly copious, rich, and expressive. But the classical Arabic of the age of the caliphs, is a dead language, as different from the modern speech of Mecca, as the Latin is from the Italian. The modern Arabic, or Arabesque, is divided into an infinity of dialects, widely diffused throughout Syria, Egypt, and northern Africa.

Literature.]—Nothing is known of the Arabian literature previous to the time of Mahomet; but during the flourishing ages of the caliphate, it became a grand and illustrious feature in the history of the human intellect. Its principal seat, however, was not in Arabia. Bagdad was the luminous centre from whence light was diffused from Samarchand to Cordova, and Arabian science and literature flourished chiefly in the conquered countries. Among the modern Arabians, learning is at a very low ebb. The chief poets are now said to be found among the wandering tribes of the province of Mareb, to the eastward of Yemen.* Some are found also in towns,

* Niebuhr, p. 92.

where,

where, as in Turkey, they amuse the company in coffee houses.

Education.]—In Yemen there are two universities, or celebrated academies, one at Damar for the Zeidites, and the other at Zebid for the Sunnites. In most of the chief cities are colleges for the study of astronomy, philosophy, medicine, &c. Near every mosque there is commonly a school, where the children of the poor are gratuitously instructed; and in most large towns there are many schools, where reading, writing, and accompts are taught. Several persons of rank also, entertain domestic preceptors for their children and young slaves.

Persons, manners, and customs.]—The Arabians are of a middle stature and thin, having a parched appearance as if dried by the sun. They are exceedingly abstemious, meat being little used, even by the rich, and their only drink being water or coffee. Their dress, like that of most Asiatics, is long and loose, consisting chiefly of a large shirt, either white, or striped with blue, and often large trowsers, a girdle of embroidered leather, a knife, and a dagger. Over the shoulder is worn a large piece of fine linen. The head dress consists of a number of bonnets, from ten to fifteen, of cotton, linen, or woollen, the outermost being often richly embroidered with gold. Around this multitude of bonnets, is wrapped a sash, or long piece of muslin, with fringes of silk or gold which hang down behind. This thick covering for the head, which might seem oppressive, is used as a security against the rays of the sun; and the same form is observable in the ancient Egyptian monuments. The lower classes of Arabians, wear only a piece of linen girt about the

loins,

loins, another over the shoulders, a belt, and a dagger, and two or three bonnets. The women are dressed in a large shirt and trowsers. Those of rank wear large veils, with rings, bracelets, necklaces, ear rings, and sometimes a nose ring. The nails are dyed red, and the hands and feet of a yellowish brown. Every art is used to make the eyebrows appear large and black, and, as in many other Oriental countries, the eye lashes are darkened with antimony.

National Character.]—The Arabians are celebrated for politeness and hospitality. It must, however, be acknowledged, that the terms of Arab and robber, have long been considered as synonymous.* But in estimating the character of the Arabians, we ought to regard them as divided into two classes, those of the cities, and those of the desert. The former are civilized and polite, the latter are robbers by profession and habit, and being, according to the best historical evidence, the posterity of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, completely verify the prediction relative to their progenitor, and involving his descendants, declaring that "his hands should be against every man, and every man's hands against him." No caravans can travel through the deserts without being strongly guarded, and those from Constantinople, Cairo, and Bagdad, to Mecca, are escorted by numerous bodies of Turkish soldiers, who are not, however, at all times able to afford them protection against these formidable assailants. But the Arabs of the desert, although they rob indiscriminately, persons of all nations and religions, are not cruel or sanguinary, and desirous only of plunder, take no delight in

* For an account of the plunder of the great caravan in its journey to Mecca in 1757, see Mariti's Trav. vol. 2, p. 117.

shedding

shedding blood. The Arabians in general possess great powers of body and intellect. A late traveller speaks with astonishment of their corporeal vigour;* and modern observation concurs with the evidence of history, in representing them as a sagacious and intelligent race.

* Jackson's Journey from India, p. 36. This traveller represents the Arabians as possessing twice the strength of Europeans!!!

ASIATIC RUSSIA.

CHAP. I.

Situation—Extent—Boundaries—Face of the Country—Mountains—Rivers—Canals—Lakes—Mineralogy—Mineral Waters—Soil—Climate—Vegetable Productions—Zoology—Natural Curiosities—Antiquities and Artificial Curiosities.

THE Russian empire in Asia extends the whole length of that continent, from the 37th degree of eastern, to the 170th degree of western longitude from London;* and from 43° to 78° of north latitude. Including the islands in the Eastern Ocean, Mr. Tooke extends it 25° farther to the east.† The whole length of Asiatic Russia may he roughly computed at 5350, and the breadth at 1960 British miles, an extent exceeding that of all Europe. The length of the whole empire in Europe and Asia, is estimated at 9200, and the breadth at 2400 British miles.‡

Boundaries.]—The northern boundary of Asiatic Russia, is the Arctic Ocean. On the east it extends to the farthest extremities of Asia, and is bounded by the Eastern Ocean, under the various denominations of

* Or continuing to count forward 190° east; but that method is not customary among geographers.

† Tooke's View Russian Emp. book 1. sect. 1.

‡ The empress Catharine, in her letter of grace 1785, mentions the extent of the whole Russian Empire as containing 32° of latitude, and 165° of longitude, exclusive of the isles. Tooke's Russia, book 1. sect. 1.

of the northern Archipelago, the seas of Ochotzk and Kamschatka. On the south-east and south, it borders on China, or rather Chinese Tartary, on Independent Tartary, Persia, and Turkey. In some parts, rivers or mountains mark the boundaries; in others, an ideal line leaves a doubtful frontier. On the west, Asiatic Russia is contiguous to the European empire.

Face of the country.]—In regions so extensive, the face of the country must be various. Asiatic Russia, however, displays less variation of surface than perhaps any other part of the globe of equal extent. Although not wholly destitute of mountains, its principal character is that of an immense plain. It also contains some elevated and extensive stepps, a feature almost peculiar to Asia. The northern and eastern parts consist chiefly of vast marshy plains, covered with almost perpetual snow, and pervaded by large rivers, which pursue, under masses of ice, their dreary course to the Frozen ocean. The immense forests of fir, pine, larch, and other trees, in the more southern parts of Siberia, may also be considered as one of the striking features of the country.

Mountains,]—The mountains of Siberia are far from being equal to those of European elevation. The Uralian mountains, separating Europe from Asia, have already been mentioned in speaking of European Russia. The principal of the Siberian chains is that of Altay, called by the Chinese, the Golden Mountain, which extends its precipitous and snowy summits from the Irtish to the Yenissay, and sends out branches in various directions beyond the limits of the Russian empire. The Bogdo Alim, or Bogdo Dola, which rears its pointed summits with striking sublimity on the frontier line between the Soongorian and the

 Mongalian

Mongalian deserts, is, if not the highest, at least the most craggy, precipitous, and irregular of all the mountains of those regions. From this a chain extends to the north-west, and another to the south-east, which is supposed to join the mountains of Thibet. The other principal mountains are those of Nershink and Stanovie. The various branches and subdivisions of all those chains, are amply described by Pallas and Tooke.* The celebrated mountains of Caucasus, extending about 400 British miles from the Caspian to the Euxine Sea, form a boundary between the Russian empire and those of Turkey and Persia. They consist chiefly of granite, with slate and limestone. Their summits are perpetually covered with ice and snow; and to a spectator approaching them from the north, they make a grand appearance.† The stupendous mountains of Elburas, situated nearly in the central part of this vast range, towers far above the rest, and is supposed by Dr. Pallas to equal Mont Blanc in elevation. The lower parts of the mountainous tracts present forests and wood lands. Almost the whole province of Kamtschatka consists of rocky mountains, containing several volcanoes.

Stepps.]—A geographical view of those vast countries cannot well be exhibited, without some description of those immense plains called stepps, which constitute a feature almost peculiar to Russian and Tartarian geography. In the north is the stepp of Petshora, bound by the White Sea and the Arctic Ocean; on the west by the Dwina; on the east by

* Instead of entering into a particular description of those remote mountains, which in this place would be tedious, I shall refer the reader to Mr. Tooke's Russ. Emp. vol. 1. p. 118 to 144.

† Pallas's latter Travels, vol. 1. ch. 12. p. 107 and 108.

the

the Petshora; and on the south by the Floetz mountains. This stepp is for the most part sandy, but full of marshes, thickly interspersed with forests, and almost entirely uninhabited, except in the districts of Archangel, Mesen, &c. The forests, however, are chiefly confined to the southern parts, the extreme cold in the north being unfavorable to the growth of wood. On this stepp are also numerous lakes, but none of them are of great extent.

The Calmuck Stepp, so called from being left in the possession of a horde of that nation till their flight in 1771, lies on the east side of the Volga. On the south it is bounded by the Caspian Sea, and the Aral Lake: on the north it is connected with the stepp of Issim. This immense desert extends about 700 English miles from west to east, and including that of Issim, almost as far from north to south. Great part of it, however, is wholly abandoned to the wandering Kirgusses. Except a ridge of sandy hills stretching from the termination of the Uralian mountains towards the Caspian sea, the whole is a vast sandy level, almost destitute of wood and fresh water, but abounding in salt lakes, and bearing the strongest marks of having been once a part of the Caspian Sea. It contains, however, several districts, not ill adapted to the purposes of agriculture and pasturage; but it is very thinly inhabited.

The stepp of the Irtish is that immense plain, which lies between the Tobol and the Irtish, and between the latter river, the May, and Oby, comprising a vast extent of territory.* It is every where full of lakes, most of them salt, and interspersed with forests of pines, firs, and birch. In many parts, however, the

* For a general description of the Tartarian and Siberian stepps, see Pallas's Trav. vol. 2 and 3.

soil is very proper for agriculture and pasturage. This plain also includes the Barabinian stepp, a fine well-watered level, in which are many considerable lakes. The Barabinian stepp alone is about 400 miles in length, and 300 in breadth. It consists for the most part of a rich black soil, and has many forests, chiefly of birch. This stepp lies between the Irtish and the Oby; and like that of Ischim, contains a number of ancient tombs, supposed to be those of the Tartar, or Mongul chiefs.

The stepp of the Yenissee and the Oby, includes the whole of that large tract which lies between these two rivers; that of the Yenissey and the Lena, is contiguous; beyond which also is that of the Lena and the Indighirka, extending eastward as far as the Kovyna. Those three stepps, although distinguished by different appellations, constitute one immense plain, extending northward to the Arctic Ocean. In the southern parts are vast forests; but towards the north, they are more rare, and the wood is low and stunted.

But the most remarkable stepp is that of the Don and the Volga, comprising the whole space included between these two rivers and the Kuban, and reaching from the Caspian Sea to the sea of Asoph. This extensive and singular stepp, which includes that of Kuma, is extremely arid and dreary, being almost entirely destitute of wood and fresh water, but abounding with salt lakes and marshes.* It has been accurately examined and amply described by Pallas, who, by the most specious arguments, supported by the nicest observations, labours to establish an important and singularly interesting hypothesis relative

* Tooke's View of Russia, vol. 1. p. 145. 150.—Pallas's latter Trav. vol. 1. ch. 3, 4, 5.

to

to the geography of an extensive part of the globe. The plan of the present work does not admit of long and critical discussions; but a concentrated view of an important conjecture, formed by so able an observer, and supported by so forcible arguments, cannot be uninteresting. Could the fact on which it rests be ascertained, it would be a curious and memorable circumstance in historical geography.

It has already been observed, that the vast desert on the east side of the Volga, called the Kalmuck Stepp, bears every mark of having once been the bottom of the Caspian Sea; and Mr. Pallas proves almost to a demonstration, that the Kuman Stepp has been a strait which united the sea with the Euxine. According to this theory, therefore, the Euxine and Caspian Seas formed one vast body of water passing round the northern extremity of Mount Caucasus, and extending over not only the stepps of the Crimea, the Kuban, &c. but also over the vast plains on the east side of the Volga, which stretch into independent Tartary, beyond the lake Aral. The whole face and composition of those desert countries, bear every mark of being the bottom of a desiccated sea. " First, the innumerable shells, which are scattered in every direction in these deserts, exactly resemble those of the Caspian Sea, and are not to be met with in the rivers; secondly, the uniformity of the soil, in all these barren regions, which, except in the quicksands, totally consists of sand or yellow loam combined with marine mire, without one intervening blade of grass, or any mineral strata, and with a bed of clay at a considerable depth below the surface;* thirdly, the saline na-

* It appears, however, from various parts of Pallas's own account, that there is grass and even shrubs in several places.

 ture

ture of the soil in general, which evidently contains common sea salt; and fourthly, the numerous salt-pits and lakes, and even the whole flat surface of this extensive desert."* The investigation of the causes of this extraordinary desiccation of so extensive a part of the Caspian and Euxine Seas, induces Pallas to adopt the well known hypothesis of Tournefort, who is of opinion, that in the times of remote antiquity the Black Sea had no communication with the Mediterranean. This ingenious writer supposes that the natural barrier of the Bosphorus having been either destroyed by an earthquake, or broken by the violent assaults and long continued pressure of the waters of the Euxine, accumulated from the Don, the Dnieper, the Dniester, and the Danube, this sea, at last, forced its passage through into the Archipelago.† If this was really the case, it is evident that the Propontis, if it did not before exist, must have been immediately formed by the inundation of a low and level country. The waters, still continuing to rush forward with impetuosity towards the Mediterranean, and following the course of the vallies, would also form the Hellespont. But it is not to be doubted, that on the first impetus of this deluge, a part of Greece and Asia Minor, with several of the isles of the Archipelago, must have been submerged, and only the higher parts left remaining. Diodorus Siculus* speaks of this tremendous inundation. Tournefort, therefore, supposes it to have been the flood, which is said to have happened

* Pallas's Trav. vol. 1, ch. 3. In order to form an estimate of the prodigious loss of water on this occasion, it is necessary to observe, that the Tartarian deserts are generally about fifteen fathoms above the present level of the surface of the Caspian Sea. Pallas, ibid.

† Tournefort, vol. 2, letter 8.

‡ Diod. Sic. Biblioth. lib. 5, p. 320, &c.

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in the time of Deucalion; and Pallas appears to adopt this opinion as no other reason can be assigned for so extraordinary a diminution of the extent of the Euxine and Caspian, or, collectively, the great Hyrcanian Sea.* If, indeed, this rupture of the Bosphorus be admitted, desiccation of the shallow parts of this vast expanse of waters must of course have followed, and the immense plains of Tartary, as well as the shallow strait on the north of Mount Caucasus, by which the two seas were connected, must, in consequence, have been gradually left dry land, and have assumed their present aspect. I shall conclude these remarks by observing, that the contraction of the Caspian and Euxine Seas, within a much narrower space than they once occupied, is evident from physical appearances; but that the bursting of the latter through the Bosphorus, the only circumstance that can be assigned as the cause of their diminution, rests on the authority of Diodorus Siculus, and only wants the support of a concurrence of historical evidence.†

Rivers.]—The Asiatic empire of Russia is watered

* The rapid current which sets through the Bosphorus and the Hellespont shews, that at present the Black Sea is much higher than the Mediterranean, and if this passage did not exist, it is evident that the former would rise much higher, and consequently acquire a greater extent.

† The plain, or stepp, on the north side of the Caucasus, which appears to have been the strait, is represented as very little elevated above the level of the Palus Meotis and the Caspian Sea.

The surface of the Caspian Sea is much lower than that of the Euxine. The level of the Volga is ten fathoms lower than that of the Don. Pallas, vol. 1, ch. 3, p. 103. Pallas thinks that an accurate survey might determine, with certainty, the ancient limits of the Caspian Sea. Trav. vol. 1, ch. 3, p. 105.

It will be observed, that the account of the flood, which happened in the time of Deucalion, is an obscure and uncertain piece of history, relating to remote and fabulous times.

by

by some of the largest rivers of this continent. The Volga, which finishes its course in Asia, has already been described. The Oby rises about the 51st degree of latitude, and receives the Irtish, a stream equal, if not superior, to its own. The Irtish has its source about the 45th degree of latitude, and consequently has the longest course. The Oby is navigable almost to its source; but its waters are often foul and fœtid, by reason of the slowness of its current and the vast morasses which it pervades. It falls by an extremely wide æstuary into the Arctic Ocean, in latitude 73°, 50′ north, and longitude 90° east, and is esteemed the largest river in the Russian empire.

The Yenissey is considered as deriving it source from the mountains near the Sea of Baikol; but, as it receives the Angara, or Tungurka, which issues from that lake, it might, with greater propriety, be said to derive from thence its origin. After receiving several rivers, and making various windings, it falls into a large bay of the Arctic Ocean, in 73° 30′ north latitude, and 103° 30′ east longitude, after a course of above 1,700 British miles.

The Lena rises to the west of the Sea of Baikol, and pursues a course nearly north-east as far as Yakutok. From that place its direction is almost due north. Its channel is of a great width and full of islands. Its whole course is computed at almost 1,600 miles. This river has a gentle current, favorable to navigation. By sailing out of the Lena into the Aldan, then into the Maia, and afterwards into the Yudoma, the journey to Ochotsk and Kamtschatka is greatly expedited. The Lena disembogues itself by five mouths into the Frozen Ocean, in latitude 73° north. Its easternmost mouth is in 153°, and its westernmost mouth

mouth in 143° east longitude. Those principal rivers receive in their course a great number of others, of which it would be of little use to exhibit a catalogue. Falling into the Frozen Ocean, the vast rivers of Asiatic Russia cannot open the way to foreign commerce;* but they are excellently adapted to the purposes of inland navigation. From the uncultivated state of the country and the want of population, their importance, however, is yet but little known. In a country like this, it can scarcely be expected that canals should be cut, as the benefits could not compensate the labour and cost. It may, however, be observed, from the course of the rivers, that by cutting two canals, one between the rivers Tschassovaia and Taghil, and the other between the Ket and the Yenissey, the latter being a distance of little more than sixty miles, and the former somewhat less, an uninterrupted inland navigation might be opened from Petersburg to the distant parts of Siberia.†

Lakes.]—The ancient and present state of the Caspian Sea, which may now be considered only as a vast lake, have already been made, in the present chapter, a subject of discussion. It only remains to remark a circumstance, which has caused many disputes among naturalists, and given rise to several fanciful hypotheses. It is well known that the Caspian Sea receives the Yaik, the Yemba, the Kur, the Araxes, the Bistraia, the Terek, and various other rivers, besides the

* In order to see how much the long journey from European Russia to the extremity of Asia is facilitated by these rivers, consult Lessop's Travels from Kamtschatka to Petersburg, an interesting work, in two volumes 8vo.

† Tooke's View of Russia, vol. 1, p. 253.

vast

vast body of water that rolls down the Volga, while it has no visible outlet; and yet it has never any perceptible swell, except in the spring, on the melting of the snows. From this circumstance, it is natural to enquire into the cause which exhausts this immense mass of waters as fast as it is supplied by so many channels.* In order to explain this phœnomenon, some have imagined subterraneous passages into the Euxine or the Persian Gulph, and not only various arguments have been adduced, but fables have been invented in support of the hypothesis. Others have ascribed the whole to evaporation. The following opinion, however, seems now to prevail. " Perhaps," says a judicious writer, " the true reason of this sea remaining equally full, is to be sought in the quality of its bottom, which consists not of a thick slime, but of a shell-sand, the particles whereof touching but in few points, it is consequently very porous. Of the same substance the whole shore is likewise formed. Layer upon layer, it lies three fathoms deep. This, indeed, lets the fresh water through, but it becomes immediately salt again by the salt water pressing on it. Through this sand then the water is filtered, and falls into the abyss beneath in the same quantity as it flows into the sea."† But where or how deep is this abyss, this immense reservoir, which during so many ages has constantly swallowed up this ceaseless influx of waters? Or, is it the porous bottom, reaching to an immense depth, by which they are absorbed? Per-

* The Black Sea, also, as Tournefort remarks, receives a much larger quantity of water from the large rivers, than it can emit through the Bosphorus. Tournefort, ubi supra.

† Tooke's Russia, vol. 1, p. 200.

haps

haps the naturalist may still suspect, that evaporation is the principal cause of this extraordinary exhaustion.

The Caspian Sea is in many places remarkably deep. Even in several places not far from the shore, a line of 450 fathoms will not reach the bottom. It is also very subject to violent and dangerous storms. The water, in general, is salt, though not in all places, particularly not in those where it receives the great rivers.† This sea has several ports, but is destitute of good harbours. It is, however, of great importance to Russia on account of the Persian trade. It abounds with a variety of fish; but we have no very circumstantial accounts of the different species. The salmon is excellent, and the herrings larger and finer than those of our seas, but not so tender.† Its shores are the haunt of myriads of water-fowl. The Caspian Sea extends about 700 miles in length from 100 to 200 in breadth; but only a part of it can be considered as comprised within the dominions of Russia, although she is the undoubted mistress of its navigation.

The lake Baikal, in the government of Irkutsk extends from the 51st to the 55th degree of north latitude, being about 350 English miles in length, and varying from 13 or 14 to near 40 in breadth. The water is fresh and transparent. It is called by the Russians the Holy Sea. From the latter end of December till the beginning of May it is generally frozen. At other times, particularly in the month of September, it is subject to frequent and violent storms, owing chiefly, perhaps, to the mountains by which it is almost surrounded. It contains several islands, on the principal of which, called Olkhon, are found sulphureous springs. The Baikal abounds with seals and

* Tooke, ubi supra. † Ibid. vol. 1, p. 201.

various

various kinds of fish, among which are seen large shoals of herrings of a particular species.* The mountains which border its shores are high, and for the most part bare; but an ingenious traveller describes with rapture, the sublime scenery which is displayed where the river Angara issues from the lake.† Between the rivers Irtish and Oby is a lake of about 170 English miles in length, and divided by an island into two parts, called the lakes of Tchany and Sourni. There are many others, both in the north and the south, but none of them remarkable either for extent or beautiful scenery.

Mineralogy.]—The mineralogy of Siberia is a copious subject and a fertile source of wealth. Peter the Great was the first who caused these remote mines to be explored, which have since afforded such ample supplies of national wealth; and in 1719 he instituted an office for their management. The principal gold-mines of Siberia are those of Ekatherinburg, on the east side of the Uralian mountains, in 57° north latitude. Mines of various kinds extend on the north and south to a considerable distance. The mines of Nershink, which consist chiefly of lead mixed with silver and gold, were discovered in 1704; and those of Kolyvan began to be wrought for the crown in 1748. The gold mines of Beresof, a few miles north-east of Ekatherinburg, are the richest in the empire. Those of Kolyvan and Nershink are silver mines, although they afford some gold. The gold is sometimes found native, but generally mixed with various substances, particularly silver; but the latter is seldom met with unmixed. In some places it is blended with lead, in

* Tooke's Russ. Emp. vol. 1, p. 203.

† Bell's Trav. vol. 1, p. 307 to 316.

others,

others, as already observed, with gold. Copper mines are seen both in the Uralian mountains and in those of Altai. Red lead is found in the mines of Beresof. But the most important and valuable mines of the Russian empire, are those of iron, which supply the numerous founderies of the Uralian mountains. Sulphur, allum, sal-ammoniac, nitre, vitriol, and natron, are found in abundance. Siberia also produces a variety of gems, such as topazes, beryl, and chrysolite. Red garnets are found in great plenty near the sea of Baikal. Between the Onon and the Argoon is produced an elegant kind of onyx. The green selfspar of Siberia is a beautiful stone, which is wrought into various kinds of ornaments. Red and green jaspers, are found in the distant mountains of Siberia. The Uralian chain produces fine white marbles, and many of the other mountains afford varieties of porphyry and granite. Lapis lazuli is also found near the Baikal lake. In short, the subterraneous riches of Asiatic Russia, are as various as they are important.

Mineral waters.]—Mineral waters do not abound in proportion to the vast extent of those countries and the abundance of mineral substances. The baths near the Terek, and those in the province of Nershink, are of a middle temperature. In the vicinity of the Baikal lake are some springs highly sulphureous. Kamtschatka presents a variety of mineral waters; but they do not appear to have been fully examined. There is a strong vitriolic spring at the village of Buigovia, in the district of Olonetz, and others of the same kind not far from Zuruikhatu in Daouria.* The vitriolic spring at Sarepta, near Tzaritzin, is the most famous mineral water in the whole empire, and almost the

* Pallas's Trav. part 3, p. 424.

only

only one that is frequented. In a circuit of about 150 miles no less than thirty-two mineral springs have, within the last thirty years, been discovered. The largest and most copious of these, is in 48° 43′ north latitude, about six or seven miles from Tzaritzin, and about two miles from the bank of the Volga. Perhaps, indeed, the mineral waters of Asiatic Russia may be more numerous than is generally supposed; for notwithstanding the laborious researches of Pallas and others, those remote regions are far from being fully explored.*

Soil.]—In countries of far less extent, the soil is found to exhibit almost every variety. That this must be the case in those immense regions, therefore, is obvious. The nature of the soil in Asiatic Russia has been, in a great measure, described in speaking of the general face of the country. From what has been said on that subject, it is evident that the sandy and marshy soils predominate. These, indeed, form the general characteristics of the country. The southern and western districts of Siberia consist chiefly of a rich black soil, remarkable for its fertility; but the northern parts are wholly incapable of agriculture. Those, indeed, have been very little explored; but imagination, by representing to the eye an immense extent of uniform morass stretching over the whole length of Asia, a scene of widely spread desolation and solitude, bound up in almost perpetual ice and snow, where all vegetation is checked and almost extinguished, may form a just idea of those uninhabitable regions, the most dismal and dreary part of the whole surface of the globe.†

* For an account of the mineral waters of both European and Asiatic Russia, see Tooke's View of the Russian Empire, vol. 1, p. 241 to 251.

† The whole northern part of Siberia, from the shores of the Arctic

Climate.

Climate.]—For the climate, a general reference may be made to European Russia, to which the Asiatic dominions of that empire are contiguous and corresponding in latitude. In both, the climate varies from the warmth of France and Italy to the eternal frost on the coasts of the Arctic Ocean. The southern frontier of the vast province of Siberia, being in about fifty degrees, and the northern extending in some parts to the seventy-eighth, but in general to the seventy-fourth degree of latitude, about three-fourths of the country lies under the same parallels with Norway and Lapland, and not being tempered with the moist and warm vapours of the Atlantic, but shut up between an immense continent on one side, and frozen seas on the other, the general frigidity of the climate may be readily conceived. In the deserts of the Kalmuck, bordering on the Volga and the Caspian Sea, the summer heats are sometimes excessive.* Throughout the southern and middle regions of Siberia, the change of the seasons is rapid. Winter and summer alternately succeed, without almost any intervening spring or autumn. On fertile soils, the quickness and luxuriance of vegetation is astonishing; but its duration is circumscribed within narrow limits.

Vegetable productions.]—Any attempt to particularize the vegetable productions of so immensely extended a territory, where both the climate and soil are so various, would lead to a prolixity inadmissible in a work of this nature. A general sketch must therefore suffice, especially as all that is known on the subject

Ocean to the extent of some hundreds of miles within land, is a vast morass, grown over with moss, and destitute of trees. In summer, the ground is thawed only to a very little depth. Pallas's Trav. p. 5.

* Pallas's latter Travels, ch. 3, p. 95.

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has been so fully displayed by Stiller, Gmelin, and Pallas. In the south-western part is a district to the north of the Tartarian deserts, and extending from the Volga to the Uralian mountains, which enjoys a delightful climate and a fertile soil. Its forests present the cedar, the cypress, the juniper, the beach, and the oak; and its orchards produce the almond, the fig, the peach, and all the other fruits of the temperate regions. In the greatest part of the wide expanse of Siberia, none but the hardiest vegetables are found. The oak, which defies the rigours of a British, or a German winter, cannot exist in the frigid climate of Siberia.* The middle regions, however, present immense forests of birch, alder, &c. as well as of all the various species of pines and firs. Many districts of Siberia are productive of corn. Some parts near the Oby, yield plentiful crops for twenty years successively.† Several districts, also, are well adapted to pasturage; but in advancing towards the north, the forests gradually disappear, and mosses of different kinds are the last traces of expiring vegetation.‡ Although Asiatic as well as European Russia, contains some delightful and fertile regions, yet partly from the natural disadvantages of soil and climate, and partly from want of population and culture, dreariness and sterility are the predominant characteristics.

Zoology.]—In regard to the animal productions of Asiatic Russia, the same remark may be made as on those of the vegetable kingdom. They are too numerous and various to be particularised. It will therefore be enough, briefly to mention such as are the most remarkable and important. In the northern parts

* Tooke's Russian Emp. vol. 1, p. 69.

† Pallas's Trav. vol. 2, p. 640. ‡ Ibid.

of

of Siberia, as well as in Lapland, the rein-deer is an useful substitute for the horse, the cow, and the sheep. In Kamtschatka, dogs are used for drawing in carriages.* The south is favored with that noble animal the horse, which, as well as the ass, is there found in its wild state. In this part, also, the camel is not uncommon. The urus and the ibex are inhabitants of the Caucasian mountains. The musk animal, the wild boar, and the stag, are found in those which encircle the Baikal. The beaver is an inhabitant of the Yenissey. Wolves, foxes, and bears of various descriptions, are met with in the northern regions. But the most remarkable part of the zoology of Asiatic Russia consists of the various animals which supply those rich furs that are converted into so valuable an article of commerce. The animals, which furnish these furs, are of a great variety of kinds, and their skins very different in value. The black fox of eastern Siberia and Kamtschatka is held in the highest estimation;† and being scarce, its skin bears an extravagant price. The importance of this animal, in commerce, is such, that sometimes a single skin cannot be had for less than 500 rubles; sometimes, even the price has been as high as 1,000 rubles.‡ The black fox is consequently the choicest object of chace among all the nations of Eastern Siberia, as one skin frequently pays the tribute of a whole village; and the care which they take of the young cubs, which they catch, is so great, that the women nourish them at their breasts.§ There are various other kinds of foxes in Siberia, but

* Lessop has given a very accurate account of the drawing of sledges by dogs, in his Travels from Kamtschatka to Petersburg, vol. 1.

† Coxe's Russian Discoveries, ch. 2, p. 14.

‡ Tooke's View of the Russ. Emp. vol. 2, book 2, sect. 1.

§ Ibid.

their skins are of a far inferior value. The sable, although of not so exorbitant a price as the black fox, however is far more plentiful, as it abounds through the whole extent of Siberia and Kamtschatka; and the inferiority of value being compensated by numbers, this animal may be reckoned the most important of all those which supply the fur trade of Russia. At the time of the conquest of Kamtschatka, the sables were so plentiful, and so little esteemed by the Kamtschadales, that for ten rubles worth of ironware the Russians found no difficulty in obtaining the value of 500 or 600 rubles in sables, leaving an enormous profit of 4000 or 5000 per cent.: and those who engaged in this traffic for the space of one year, frequently acquired 30,000 rubles, or even sometimes a greater sum. The prices of the sables are various. Some skins fetch fifty rubles, or more, on the spot.* The Chinese, the Persians, and the Turks, are the greatest admirers of delicate furs. Constantinople is said to be the principal market for sables.

Besides these, innumerable other small animals contribute to the fur trade of Russia. The principal of these are the martin, the squirrel, the ermine, the rabbit, and the marmotte. The methods of taking all these animals are various; traps and snares of different kinds are used. Sometimes those of the kinds last enumerated are coursed with dogs. The bear, the wolf, the lynx, the beaver, the glutton, the polecat, the ferret, and various other animals, are also objects of chace in Asiatic Russia. For taking the boar in particular, many ingenious methods are devised.† Several attempts have been made to estimate

* See Tooke's Russ. Emp. vol. 2. book 10. sect. 1.

† Ibid.

the

the annual sum of national wealth accruing to Russia from her valuable furs. The judicious author of the view of the empire, however, although he acknowledges the amount of those riches resulting from the chace to be very great, ventures to discredit, or at least to dispute those estimations, which raise it so high as 5,000,000 of rubles, and candidly owns that no existing documents afford any certain ground of calculation.* The trade in furs carried on in the Russian dominions, with all its concomitant circumstances, would alone furnish matter for a curious and interesting volume. The brevity of this work allows only this general remark, that the chace, an employment which necessity first imposed on man, for the security or the support of his existence, and which, in the European nations, has entirely lost its original character, and become an object of diversion and pleasure, is in Asiatic Russia, a grand object of commercial and political economy.

The variety of fowls and fishes which frequent the shores, and inhabit the waters of the Caspian Sea, as well as of the Eastern and Frozen Ocean, and the great rivers, corresponds with that of the quadrupeds on the land. The walrus, or sea-horse, the whale, and the seal, are common in the Arctic Ocean; the maniti is found in the straits of Beering. Some of the fishes of the Caspian have been mentioned in describing that sea. Those of the greatest importance, however, are the large and small sturgeon, and the sevrugen. Of the great sturgeon, on a medium of four years, there appears to be caught in the fisheries of the Caspian, the Volga, and the Yaik, the number of 103,500; of the small sturgeon, 302,000; and of the

* Tooke's Russ. Emp. ubi supra.

sevrugen, or acipenser stellatus, 1,345,000. The whole produce of these fisheries, at a moderate calculation, amounts to 1,760,081 rubles, a sum equal at par to 352,081*l*. sterling per annum.*

Natural curiosities.]—The principal natural curiosities of Asiatic Russia, consist in the grand features already mentioned, which give to those regions an aspect very different from that of the countries of Europe. Except the romantic scenes around the lake Baikal, they are mostly of the horrid and melancholy kind; and the naked levels in the north of Siberia from a dreary contrast with the thick forests in the south, which overhang the roads and the rivers with a gloomy and dismal shade. To these may be added the volcanic mountains of Kamtschatka, which have not yet been accurately explored.

Antiquities and artificial curiosities.]—In countries which appear to have never been the seat of refinement, and in which the arts do not seem to have ever taken up their abode, the artificial curiosities and remains of antiquity cannot be expected to be either magnificent or numerous. The most remarkable, are the tombs of Tatarian chiefs, seen in many of the stepps, particularly near the rivers Yenissey and Irtish, which, although they present only rude sculptures, yet, by the rich coffins, and other ornaments, found in some of them, shew that nations more civilized and opulent than the present nomadic hordes, once possessed those vast regions. Several such are also met with in the countries adjacent to the Yaik and the Volga.† Not far from Astrachan, are the remains of an extensive Tartar city, of which nothing

* Pallas's latter Travels, vol. 1. ch. 8.

† Pallas's Travel, vol. 1, ch. 7.

thing is left but ruins and fragments. It appears to have been the residence, and to have contained the mausoleum of some of the chans. This venerable place is said to have been plundered of many rich treasures, among which were coffins covered with silver. Pallas observes, that the remains of this city display a degree of taste and elegance, which he had no where else seen among the Tartarian ruins.*

* Pallas's Travels, vol. 1. ch. 6.

CHAP. II.

Principal Cities and Towns—Edifices—Islands.

ASTRACHAN is the principal city of Asiatic Russia; and next to Moscow and Petersburg, the most important of the whole empire in respect of commerce, wealth, and population. This city is situated near the mouth of the Volga, in 46° north latitude, and 51° east longitude, being the principal mart of the trade carried on between Russia and Persia. The buildings were formerly very mean, the houses being wholly of wood, and the churches only of brick. But on account of the high price of timber, the citizens of Astrachan now construct their houses either of brick, or of a kind of free-stone from the quarries of Tzaritzin, on the banks of the Volga. From this circumstance, the city begins to have a much better appearance; but the dearness of wood is severely felt by the inhabitants. Mr. Pallas has exhibited a distinct view of the rapid advance of the value of the different kinds of timber between the years 1786 and 1793, by which it appears, that in the short space of seven years, this necessary article had risen to five, and in some instances, to six times its former price, a circumstance not unworthy of notice in commercial history, especially as it is not owing to any natural scarcity, nor to the increased expence of carriage, but solely to the

5 monopoly

monopoly of speculating individuals.* In consequence of the advanced price of wood, that of bricks has been raised from five to twelve or thirteen rubles per thousand, a higher price than is paid either in Moscow or Petersburg, and about double to that which they bear in England. On account of the exorbitant dearness of bread, the wages of workmen are also extravagantly high at Astrachan, when compared with most other places in Russia. A common day labourer receives from seventy to eighty copecks, or from 2*s.* $9\frac{1}{4}$*d* to 3*s.* $2\frac{1}{4}$*d.* sterling; and a carpenter, a ruble and a half, or reckoning at par, six shillings sterling per day. It must, however, be observed, that Astrachan has recently been much improved, not only in its private, but also in its public structures. At present, it displays many elegant stone buildings. The principal of these, are two commercial halls for the reception and sale of merchandise, one of which is appropriated to the Tartar merchants, and the other, which belongs to Koloustof, an Armenian, is for the accommodation of the Persian traders who resort to this city.†

The foreign trade of Astrachan with India, Buckaria, and Persia, but especially the latter, is considered by Mr. Pallas as detrimental to Russia, Great sums of money are carried out of the empire by the importation of silk, cotton, madder, and a variety of other commodities, which might be produced in equal perfection in the northern parts of the Russian dominions, in the vicinity of Astrachan, aud in the province of Taurida. That judicious traveller, therefore, recommends, in the strongest terms, the breeding of silkworms in Taurida, and the cultivation of cotton, &c.

* Pallas's latter Trav. vol. 1. ch. 8.

† Pallas ubi supra.

in the countries adjacent to the Volga.* He also observes, that the exports from Astrachan to Persia, consist chiefly of foreign, with very few Russian commodities, so that the balance of this trade is entirely against Russia. The principal and most lucrative trade of Astrachan, consists in its vast fisheries in the Volga and the Caspian Sea, which have already been mentioned. These fisheries are also extremely advantageous to the whole empire. They furnish the principal article of food to the whole of European Russia, with its populous capitals, during the long fasts of the Greek church, which comprise at least one third of the year. By fishing, and carrying the fish on rafts in the river, or on sledges by land, or by selling them on the different markets, great multitudes of people find a profitable employment. Besides the actual inhabitants of Astrachan, who are employed in the fishery, about 10,000 fishing canoes come thither every spring, each having on board at the least two persons. Of this number of strangers, amounting to upwards of 20,000, some hire themselves to the great fisheries, others purchase the permission to fish for themselves, for which the price is generally about seven rubles each canoe for the whole summer. The rent of a cellar for stowing and salting their fish, is about twenty-five rubles.† This fishery, however, is so managed as to have become in a great measure a monopoly, in the hands of the chief merchants of Astrachan, who have acquired very considerable wealth. These speculators also farm the sturgeon fisheries at Salian, in Persia, as the Persians

* Pallas also fills many pages with observations on the culture of the vine in the vicinity of Astrachan. Latter Trav. ch. 8.

† Tooke's View of Russ. Emp. vol. 3. p. 65, marginal note.

never

never eat any of that kind of fish.* For this they pay an annual rent of 2500 rubles; and the expences of supporting this fishery are calculated at 55,000, composing an aggregate of 80,000. The annual produce of the fishery is estimated at 200,000 rubles. This single concern, therefore, leaves a net annual profit of 120,000 rubles, or 24,000*l.* sterling to Astrachan. The seal fishery is also carried on in a very profitable manner, by the opulent part of the Astrachan merchants, as the Caspian Sea is extremely rich in seals. Astrachan has a lucrative trade in isinglass, which is prepared from the air-bladders of the sturgeons. It forms a very considerable article of exportation from Petersburg to England; and the English supply the Spaniards, Portuguese, and other nations, with that article for purifying their wines. The caviar, or roe of the sturgeon, is also a very considerable article of commerce. The vast quantity of these two commodities annually exported to different countries, their advancing price, and increasing demand, are additional proofs of the importance of those fisheries to the wealth of Astrachan, and the commerce of the Russian empire. The population of Astrachan is computed at about 70,000. One of the great disadvantages of this city is, its being subject to inundations, especially when the wind blows from the south, or south-east. These sea-winds from the Caspian, by raising the waters of the Volga, frequently cause them to inundate the lower parts of the city. The climate is intensely hot in the summer;† and during that season it very seldom

* This fishery of Salian is so productive, that 15,000 sturgeons are not unfrequently caught in one day. Pallas ubi supra.

† The heat in summer is sometimes so intense, that the mercury in Fahrenheit's thermometer is as high as 103½. Tooke's Russ. vol. 1. p. 29.

rains.* Astrachan was formerly the capital of a Tartar kingdom, and was conquered by the Czar Ivan Vassillievitch II. A. D. 1554. The present Astrachan, however, is of a more modern date, and does not occupy the site of the Tartar city, the ruins of which are to be seen somewhat higher upon the western bank of the Volga. The first experiment for cultivating the vine at this place, is said to have been made by an Austrian monk. Peter the Great strenuously promoted the establishment of vineyards in its vicinity; and invited thither, by the most liberal encouragement, expert vine-dressers from foreign countries. The culture of the vine, however, proved unsuccessful till the year 1752, when Major Parobitsh, a Hungarian, was appointed inspector of the vineyards of Astrachan. This gentleman imported wines from Persia, Hungary, and other parts of the world, and by numerous experiments, greatly improved the imperial vineyards. Encouraged by his example, and by the evident advantages accruing from this branch of productive industry, several private individuals have been induced to engage in the pursuit. At this time there are some hundreds of vineyards in Astrachan and its vicinity. They are generally planted near the branches of the Volga, which surround and intersect the city. Those places are principally chosen for the facility of irrigation, which the want of rain in the summer, renders indispensably necessary. The vineyards of Astrachan are irrigated by means of machines constructed in the eastern manner; but as Pallas observes, the process is expensive, as they cannot be wrought but by the assistance of windmills. In another place, however, he mentions the working of them by oxen or horses,

* Pallas ubi supra.

which

which cannot be less expensive.* On the whole, it appears from the remarks of that judicious traveller, that the vine is not cultivated at Astrachan without great labour and expence. At the same time, however, he observes, that notwithstanding the expences, the vineyards leave tolerable profit.† In this description of Astrachan, and its trade, I have entered somewhat more into particulars than the plan of this work in general allows; but it was necessary to exhibit a tolerably clear view of a city, which is not only by far the most considerable of all Asiatic Russia, but which, from its situation in respect of Persia, and the central parts of Asia, must, in a political as well as a commercial view, be regarded as one of the most important points of the whole Russian empire. The other cities are of far inferior importance.

Tobolski.]--Tobolski, which is considered as the capital of all Siberia, contains only about 15,000 inhabitants. It is situated on the east bank of the Irtish, in 58° 12' north latitude, and in 68° 17' east longitude. That part of it, which, from its situation on a hill, is called the upper town, has a stone fortress. Tobolski is the residence of the governor and the Archbishop. Some Indian commodities are brought thither by Buckarian and Kalmuck merchants; but the commerce is not considerable. Provisions are plentiful and cheap.

Irkutsk.]—Irkutsk, the second city of Siberia, has a population of about 12,000. It is situated on the river

* The words in the English translation are these: " There is no vineyard at present in this neighbourhood, but what has at least one or more windmills, or machines to raise water, which are worked by oxen or horses." Pallas's latter Trav. vol. 1. ch. 9. p. 321. The expression does not seem perfectly clear.

† See Pallas's Dissertation on the culture of the vine at Astrachan. Trav. vol. 1. ch. 9.

Angara

Angara, which issues from the lake of Baikal. The houses are mostly of wood, but large and commodious. This city, however, has several churches, and other edifices of stone. It is the see of an archbishop, and the seat of supreme jurisdiction over eastern Siberia. Irkutsk is the chief mart of the commerce between Russia and China, although the business is transacted at Kiakta. None of the other towns of these remote regions are of any great importance.

Bucharist.]—Bucharist, is the capital of Kamtschatka, is only a mean wooden village; and the port of St. Peter and St. Paul, or Petropaulowski, in the same province, consists of only a few wooden houses.*

Ochotsk and Yakutsk.]—Ochotsk, on the sea of that name, and Yakutsk, on the wide and frosen Lena, would in other countries be regarded as little better than villages; but in those remote and desert regions, even a village inhabited by Russians, becomes of some consideration.

Kiakta and Maimatschin.]—Kiakta, already mentioned, merits some attention, solely from being the station, where, according to stipulated regulations, all the commerce between the Russians and the Chinese is carried on. Kiakta is situated on the frontier between the two empires. Opposite to it, and at the distance of only 140 yards to the south, is the Chinese town and fort of Maimatschin. In the midway between the Chinese and the Russian towns, two posts are planted in order to mark the limits of the two empires. Both the towns are situated in a romantic valley, surrounded by high, rocky, and for the most part well wooded mountains, in latitude 36° north, and longitude 106° 38′ east from London, at the distance of about 3076 miles

* See Lessop's description.

from

from Moscow, and 1025 from, Pekin. The Russian town consists of a fortress, and a small town, containing no more than 120 wooden houses, very irregularly built. The principal buildings in the fortress, are a wooden church, the governor's house, the custom-house, the magazine for provisions, and the guard-house. It contains also a range of shops and warehouses, barracks for the garrison, and some houses belonging to the crown, which are inhabited by the principal merchants. Most of these buildings are only of wood. The fortress is a square enclosed with pallisades, and strengthened at the angles with wooden bastions. The town is surrounded with a wooden wall, covered at the top with *chevaux de frize.* The three gates of each are constantly guarded. The garrison consists of a company of regulars, with some Cossacks. The Chinese town has no other fortifications than a wooden wall, and a ditch of about three feet wide.* Here is a garrison of Monguls, in tattered clothes, and armed with clubs. This town contains 200 houses, and about 1200 inhabitants. The two principal streets cross each other at right angles. None of the streets are paved, but only laid with gravel, and kept remarkably clean. The houses are spacious, uniformly built of wood, not more than fourteen feet high, plaistered and white washed. They are constructed round a court-yard of about seventy feet square, and gravelled. In the houses of the wealthier sort, the roof is of plank, but the meaner habitations only of lath, covered over with turf. The windows are large; but on account of the dear-

* The description of Maimatschin might more properly seem to belong to China; but on account of its close proximity to Kiakta, I have placed it here, as from their intimate connection, both seem to compose one Russo-Chinese station.

ness

ness of glass, they are mostly of paper, except a few panes in the sitting-room. In this room there is very little furniture; but a number of painted idols made of paper, and placed in niches. Before these are placed lamps, which are lighted on festivals; and a vessel, in which the ashes of incense are collected, as well as a variety of small ornaments and artificial flowers. Curtains hang before the niches, but the Chinese readily allow strangers to draw them aside, and view the idols. At this place is a theatre, which is only a small shed, neatly painted, open in the front, and only spacious enough to contain the stage. The audience stand in the street. Here the servants belonging to the merchants act, on festivals, short burlesque farces, in honour of their idols.* The great pagoda, or temple, is an elegant building, richly decorated on the outside with columns, lacquered and gilded sculpture, small bells, and other ornaments, peculiar to the Chinese architecture. The inside displays a rich profusion of gilding, corresponding with the gaudines of the exterior. The walls are covered with paintings, representing the exploits of the principal idol. The temple contains five idols, of a colossal size. The principal of these is seated alone in the middle recess, between two columns ornamented with gilded dragons, and surpasses in more than a four-fold proportion, the human stature. His hair and beard are black, and his face glistens like burnished gold. Large streamers of silk hang down from the roof of the temple upon his upper parts. This idol is called by the Chinese, Loo-ye, or the first and most ancient; and by the Mandshurs, guanloe, or the superior god; but the Monguls and Calmucks call him ghes-

* Pallas's Trav. in Siberia, p. 3.

sur Khan, and do not consider him as a divinity; but only as a great hero, the Bacchus or Hercules of Eastern Tartary. It is difficult, however, or indeed impossible to trace the legends, to explain the religion, and analyse the ideas of nations, with whose manners and language we are so little acquainted.

The area of the temple is entered by two gates from the south. In the middle are two wooden turrets, surrounded by galleries. In one of these is a large bell of cast iron, which is occasionally struck with a mallet; the other contains two huge kettle drums, similar to those used by the Kalmucks in their religious ceremonies. On each side of the area are ranges of buildings inhabited by the priests. This area communicates by a handsome gateway with the inner court, which is bordered on each side by small compartments, open in front, with railing before them, and decorated on the inside with the legendary stories of the idols, exhibited in a series of historical paintings. At the farther extremity of this court is a building constructed in the same style of architecture as the temple. The inside of this edifice is sixty feet long, by thirty broad. It is stored with spears, long pikes, shields, and other ancient weapons and instruments of war, of an enormous size, with military ensigns, representing hands, dragons' heads, and other figures. All these warlike instruments are richly gilded. Opposite to the entrance is erected a yellow standard, embroidered with foliage and silver dragons, and under it, on a kind of altar, is a series of oblong tables, bearing Chinese inscriptions. In order to shorten the description, it suffices to say, that the temple, and its appurtenances, the idols, the walls, and indeed every thing both on the inside and the

 outside,

outside, displays a gaudy profusion of silken drapery, of gilding, painting, carving, &c. in the Chinese style of decoration.

Maimatschin is entirely a trading station. The merchants come from the northern parts of China, chiefly from Pekin, Nankin, and the other principal towns. None of them are settled here with their families; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that there is not one woman in Maimatschin. This arises from the nature of the Chinese laws, which totally prohibit the women from having any intercourse with foreigners. The Chinese trade to Siberia is wholly managed by partnerships. The partners mutually relieve one another. One remains a stated time, usually about a year; and when his partner arrives with a fresh stock of Chinese goods, he returns home with the Russian merchandise. The trade carried on here is entirely a barter, or exchange of goods, no purchases being paid for in money. On the side of the Russians, furs and peltry constitute the most important article. The greatest part of the furs are brought from Siberia, and the newly discovered isles in the Eastern Ocean. The supply, however, is not equal to the demand. Foreign furs are therefore imported at Petersburg, and sent to Kiakta, for the supply of the Chinese market. England furnishes a large quantity of beaver, and other skins, which she procures from Hudson's Bay and Canada. The second article of exportation from Russia to China, is cloth. The coarser sort is of Russian manufacture; the finer, is foreign, principally English, Prussian, and French. The other commodities are various kinds of manufactured goods, both Russian and foreign, with cattle and provisions. The Chinese purchase both camels, horses, and horned

 cattle,

cattle, at Kiakta; and give high prices for dogs, such as hounds, greyhounds, and dogs for hunting the wild boar. The commodities which China furnishes to this important mart, are raw and manufactured silk and cotton,* porcelain, lacquered and varnished furniture, fans, toys, tigers' and panthers' skins, various ingredients used in colouring, rhubarb, and several other kinds of drugs, tobacco, and great quantities of tea. This last commodity, which is now become so favorite an object of European luxury, is esteemed by the Russian merchants, the most profitable article of importation.† It is worthy of observation, that "the teas which are brought into Russia are much superior in flavor and quality to those which are sent to Europe from Canton. The original goodness of the tea is probably the same in both cases; but it is conjectured that the transport by sea considerably impairs the aromatic flavour of the plant."‡ From this slight view, the philosophical observer of the intercourse among nations, will perceive that Kiakta, though situated in the obscure recesses of the Tartarian deserts, is the theatre of a very important and extensive commerce.

Islands.]—These islands lie in different groupes in in the eastern ocean between Asia and America, and are usually classed under the following heads: the Alentian, the Andrenovian, the Kurilian, and the Fox

* The exportation of raw silk from China is prohibited under the penalty of death; but notwithstanding the severity of this prohibition, a considerable quantity is smuggled every year by the way of Kiakta. Coxe's Russ. Discov. p. 339.

† This description of Kiakta and Maimatschin is collected from Coxe's Russ. Discov, p. 312, &c.—and Pallas's Trav. p. 3—109, &c.

‡ Russ. Discov. p. 341. A pound of the best tea was, in the latter part of the last century, estimated at two rubles, and sold for three rubles at Petersburg. Coxe ubi supra.

Islands.* They have been amply described by the different Russian discoverers; and the situations of several of them have been observed and ascertained by Cook and other navigators.† But the plan of this compendium does not allow of a particular investigation of minute subjects. The inhabitants of all these isles were found in a completely savage state; and their condition is not yet much ameliorated. The only importance of these islands to Russia is the profitable supplies which they yield to the fur trade.‡ They produce, for the most part, the same furs as Kamtschatka and Siberia. But their most valuable production is the sea otter, of which the best skins sell at Kamtschatka for 30 or 40, and at Kiakta to the Chinese, from 80 to 140 rubles, or from 16*l.* to 28*l.* sterling, a-piece. The traders are mostly merchants of Irkutsk, Yakutsk, and other towns of Siberia. The vessels are equipped from the river of Kamtschatka, or from the haven of Ochotsk; but more frequently the latter. They are generally manned with an equal number of Russians and Kamtschadales, and carry from forty to seventy men. The expence of fitting out is considerable, as there is nothing at Ochotsk for the building of ships but timber. Every thing else that is requisite for their construction must be brought from Yakutsk on horses. The dearness of corn, which must be transported from the districts bordering on the Lena, prevents a provision of flour from being made proportionable to the duration of the voyage,

* The Kurilian islands are the southernmost, and extend from the southern promontory of Kamtschatka towards Japan.

† See Coxe's Russ. Discov. Passim, and Cooke's observations in the northern Archipelago, &c. Voyages, p. 2.

‡ For a particular description of these islands, see Coxe's Russian Discoveries, or Tooke's Russ. Emp. vol. 1, p. 156 to 174.

which commonly lasts three or four years. From the excessive scarcity of cattle, both at Ochotsk and Kamtschatka, very little provision is laid in at either of these places ;* and the crews are therefore obliged to provide themselves with the flesh of sea animals, which are caught and cured at Beering's Island, where the vessels generally winter. From these circumstances it may be perceived, that such voyages are attended with hardships, which the Russians and Kamtscadales are, of all people, the fittest to encounter. The vessels are badly constructed, the seas full of rocks and extremely tempestuous: shipwrecks, therefore, are common. Besides these dangers of the sea, the crews are frequently surprised and killed, and the vessels destroyed by the islanders. The risk of the trade is consequently great, as well as the hardships and dangers to which the mariners are exposed. But the profits accruing to the merchants, in case of success, are so considerable, as fully to counterbalance the hazards of the adventure. After a prosperous voyage, the gain is at the most moderate computation, not less than cent. per cent. and it frequently amounts to twice that rate.†

* In 1772, beef sold at $12\frac{1}{2}$ copecs, or *6d.* sterling per pound, above four times its price at Moscow. Coxe's Russ. Disc. p. 10.

† Coxe's Russ. Disc. p. 11.

CHAP. III.

Historical View—General Progress of Society—Of Arts and Sciences—Literature and Commerce.

THE history of all ancient nations is dark and confused; but that of the various tribes which inhabit Asiatic Russia, is peculiarly unconnected and chaotic.* So many different nations, most of them leading a wandering life, in a state of unlettered barbarism, could not be expected to leave any historical documents, from which posterity or strangers could derive any positive information. All these roaming hordes, wandering from place to place in the interior of an immense continent, were almost totally unknown to the historians of Greece and Rome, till impelled by their mutual hostilities, in conjunction with a migratory disposition, they appeared on the frontiers of the civilized world, and by their ravages acquired a tremendous celebrity. Under the names of Scythians, Huns, Avars, Tartars, &c. the Nomadic hordes of those immense regions have, at different times, been the terror of Europe and Asia. But after the volcano had spent its fury, and the ferocious swarms had retired to their native deserts, or become civilized by intermixture with the nations which they had conquered,

* In order to avoid prolixity, I shall include, in one view, the history of both Asiatic Russia and Chinese Tartary. They cannot, indeed, be well separated.

quered, they again sunk into oblivion, and remained unnoticed till another irruption excited the attention and fears of their southern and western neighbours. Those various hordes of central Asia, like the Goths, the Vandals, the Franks, and other barbarians of northern Europe, are represented by historians sometimes under different names, designating the same people; or sometimes under aggregate names, including different nations forming a chaos, which no investigation can reduce into order. Several laudable attempts have been made by able writers to dissipate the confusion of Tartarian history; but after the most laborious research, they have been able to develope only a very small portion that bears any mark of certainty.* Unless imagination be employed to form an ideal history, that of the Scythian or Tartar nations must present numerous chasms. Prominent features, and memorable but unconnected periods, are all that can be brought forward to the view; and in exhibiting these, I shall include all that part of Asia which lies between European Russia, China, Persia, and the Arctic Ocean, in one general representation.

Whatever fancy may imagine, or fiction pretend, no historical documents exist that can enable us to make proper distinctions. It may, however, be observed, that, as the Slavonians and Finns are confined to European Russia, two primitive races, the Monguls and the Tartars, unless we may add the Tonguses, occupy

* "The united efforts of the numerous inquisitive historians, both foreign and domestic, who have employed themselves on these subjects, have been able to cast but a feeble light on the origin of the greater part of the nations of the Russian empire; and the researches of many of them have been lost in traditions, the romantic obscurity whereof has left us no hope of arriving at the truth." Tooke's Russ. Emp. vol. 1, book 2, sect. 1, p. 261.

the whole extent of northern and central Asia, and are the original stems of all those nations, which at different times, and under so many different names, have rendered themselves tremendously famous by their desolating conquests. "The Monguls," says Mr. Tooke, "a nation remarkable as the disturbers of the world, every where extended their ravages, as if the annihilation of the human race had been their ultimate object. Had not their violences brought about revolutions in the state of governments and of mankind, and produced consequences that are still visible, the historian would never have profaned his pen, by recording the catastrophes of these barbarians; and their bloody trophies would long ago have been consigned to oblivion."* In the ninth century, three nations unknown to classical antiquity, appeared on the north of China. These were the Monguls, in the western part, or modern Mongalia; the Ketanes farther east; and still farther, on the shores of the Eastern Ocean, the Nindches, who are the progenitors of the Tonguses, and the Mandshurs, the present sovereigns of China. The Kitanes, in the tenth century, subdued the other two nations and the northern part of China; but the Nindches rebelled against them, brought them under their subjection, and succeeded to their empire. The Monguls were divided into several hordes, and governed by their own khans, although under the paramount dominion of the Nindches. It was one of these petty princes, originally named Temudschin, who, under the name of Tschinghis, or Genghis Khan, became the founder of a new empire, and one of the most memorable scourges of the world.

Tschinghis Khan, succeeding his father in the year

* Tooke's View of Russ. Emp. vol. 1, book 2, sect. 3.

1176,

1176, at the age of thirteen, became the sovereign of 40,000 families; and as he advanced in years, the intestine quarrels among the khans of the different hordes, afforded him the opportunity of becoming the chief of the whole Mongul nation. He now began to carry into execution the great plans of conquest, which his restless mind had conceived. During his formidable career of twenty years, he subjugated all the countries from Mongalia to Persia; and advancing westward, round the northern extremity of the Caspian Sea, and following the shores of the Euxine, penetrated as far as the Dnieper. It would be tedious to trace minutely the progress of the Monguls, and disgusting to detail the bloody massacres that marked the footsteps of those barbarian conquerors. Historians inform us, that when the city of Khovaresm, the capital of the kingdom of that name, was taken, A.D. 1220, no fewer than 100,000 persons fell by the sword. In 1223, the Russians and the Polovtzes were defeated at the great battle of Kalka, in which six Russian princes lost their lives, and the greatest part of their army was left dead on the field. The Monguls then ravaged the coasts of the Euxine, as far as the Dnieper, and returned by Kaptschak to Bucharia, where Tschinghis Khan then had his residence. In the midst of those scenes of massacre and desolation, historians distinguish one man, whose name is an honour to human nature; Ilidschutzay, who appears to have been of the dethroned imperial house of the Kitanes, was, for his consummate wisdom, advanced by Tschinghis to the office of his prime minister; and by his humane counsels saved millions who would otherwise have fallen victims to the savage Monguls. This man may be said to have formed the Mongalian state. He endeavoured,

deavoured, by all possible means, to polish the manners of those barbarians, and disseminated among them some knowledge of the arts and sciences.*

Tschinghis Khan had, in the sweep of his conquests, reduced under his dominion all the Tartar nations, who, from time immemorial, had inhabited the countries about the northern and eastern coasts of the Caspian, where their descendants still have their seats. These people, before scarcely known to the nations of Europe, first acquired some consequence in history at the time of their subjugation by the Monguls. Being among the nations first conquered, they were speedily incorporated with the conquerors, and contributed to swell their armies. Distributed under the banners of the Mongalian commanders, they enjoyed their share of the plunder, and in history the glory of their conquests. Such has ever been the case in making extensive conquests and forming great empires. In the latter ages of the Roman empire, the armies of Rome were a mixture of many different nations; and of those of the Saracen caliphs only a small proportion consisted of native Arabians. In those cases, the first conquerors, the ruling part of the collective mass, transmit to the whole their national appellation. In the latter military expeditions of Tschinghis Khan, it is evident that the Tartars composed the most numerous part of his armies. Of this no other proof is necessary, than the single circumstance of the Tartarian, and not the Mongalian, becoming the predominant language of the conquered countries. From the ignorance of the Europeans, it also happened that the Tartarian eclipsed the Mongalian name, and the conquests and depredations of the two united nations,

* Tooke's View Russ. Emp. vol. 1, book 2, sect. 3.

with a commixture of various other tribes, have in general terms been ascribed to the Tartars.

Tschinghis Khan, after having subjugated the north-western parts of China, meditated the conquest of the whole of that vast country. But while he was making preparations for his grand expedition, this destroyer of the human race was surprised by death, in the midst of his vast projects, in the year 1227, being the sixty-fourth or sixty-fifth of his age. Tschinghis divided his immense dominions among his three sons and Baaty, his nephew;* but his son Oktay with the title of grand khan, had the paramount sovereignty over the whole empire. Such was the constitution of this immense state under Oktay Khan and his three successors. They were grand khans of the immense Mongalian empire; but numerous collateral descendants of the family of Tschinghis reigned over vast tracts of country, although dependent on the grand khannate. In order, also, to ensure the peaceable subjection of the conquered countries, the native princes were by the Mongals permitted to retain a subordinate authority, as we have seen in the history of European Russia. Oktay reduced the tributary kings of Korea, and subjugated all the northern provinces of China. He then conceived the vast design of over-running the world from one end to the other of our hemisphere. With an army of 600,000 men he marched against Southern China. At the same time, another army under Baaty, Manku, and Kayuk, the son of Oktay, marched towards the west; and, as al-

* This Baaty had for his share the Khaptschak, consisting of the countries adjacent to the Volga and the Caspian Sea. It was he who, in conjunction with other Mongalian chiefs conquered Russia. Tooke, ubi supra.

ready observed, subdued all Russia, except Novogorod. Baaty then advanced into Hungary, which he pillaged, together with Slavonia, Bosnia, Servia, and Bulgaria, making every where a horrible massacre of the inhabitants.* At the same time he detached two formidable armies, which extended the same scenes of desolation and slaughter over Poland, Silesia, and Moravia.

While the Monguls were committing these horrible depredations in Europe, they were at the same time prosecuting the war against the Koreans and the southern Chinese, and likewise over-running the hither Asia with their numerous hosts. They made an incursion into Armenia, entered Mesopotamia, and approached Bagdad. They ravaged and subjugated several cities and districts of Asia Minor; obliged the sultan of Iconium to become tributary; and then advancing into Syria, penetrated as far as Aleppo. Oktay was arrested by the hand of death in the full career of his conquests, A.D. 1242, in the fifteenth year of a most bloody and destructive reign. An interregnum succeeded; during which the wise and good Ilidschutzay, minister of the two preceeding khans, died of grief, it is said, at seeing those increasing desolations. On his death, instead of the great riches that were expected, nothing was found in his possession except books, several of which he had written himself, on history, politics, and astronomy, with collections of coins, maps, pictures, &c. We cannot, as an intelligent author observes, but contemplate with satisfaction so illustrious a character, amidst such a horrid crew of blood-thirsty barbarians.†

* See Historical Sketch of Russia.

† Tooke's View Russ. Emp. vol. 1, book 2, p. 417.

After

After this interregnum, Kayuk, succeeding to the grand khannate, adopted the devastating plans of his predecessors, and was making formidable preparations for the conquest of all Europe, when, after a very short reign, death suddenly defeated his projects. His successor, Manku Khan, whose brother Hologan, took Bagdad,* put to death the caliph, Motassem, abolished the caliphate, and having subdued all Asia Minor, extended the Mongalo-Tartarian empire as far as the Bosphorus. On the death of Manku, his brother, Koblay, who, in quality of viceroy, had been occupied in prosecuting the war against the dynasty of Song, in Southern China, was elected grand khan. This monarch, however, remained in China, and in manners became a perfect Chinese. The distance of the paramount sovereign accelerated the dissolution of the enormous Mongalian monarchy, which was now split into five independent, and still very extensive sovereignties. These were China, Persia, Kaptschak, Turan, and Dschagatay, which last comprised Great and Little Bucharia, with some of the neighbouring provinces.

Koblay, at last, completed the conquest of China. This branch of the family of Tschinghis formed itself entirely after the Chinese pattern. The princes of this house reigned some time over China, but having lost their martial character, they were at last expelled by the native dynasty of Ming, and driven into Mongalia, where their posterity at present live in subjection to the Chinese sceptre. The Mongalian empire being now split into independent states, it was no longer the grand khan, but the khan of the Kaptschak on the

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 11, p. 416. He places the extinction of the caliphate in the year 1258.

banks

banks of the Volga, to which Russia was subject during the space of about 200 years. Baaty founded this khannate, and subdued Russia, about the year 1240, and before the end of the thirteenth century the Mongalian empire was separated, as already observed, into unconnected states. From that period till about the year 1441, Kaptschak continued to be a powerful and well compacted state; but about that time it split into the three separate khannates of Kaptschak, Kasan, and Astrachan. In 1506, the khannate of Kaptschak was annihilated: its remaining power and territory were divided among the khans of Kasan and Astrachan, and the newly-erected khannate of Krimea. The two former were conquered by the czars, Ivan Vassillievitch I. and Ivan Vassillievitch II.; and in 1583 the Krimea was incorporated with the Russian empire. All the other khannates fell in the same manner by intestine divisions and foreign conquest. That of Turan, on the mountains of Aral and the banks of the Yaik was, in 1598, annihilated by the Russians when they conquered Siberia. As I have proposed to exhibit in this division of the history of mankind, a general sketch of that of the Monguls and the Tartars, it is necessary here to revert to another tremendous revolution, effected in Asia, by that incorporated people.

About the year 1369, Timur, or Tamerlane, a prince of the Mongul race, near Samarchand, having rendered himself master of all Bucharia, became equal to Tschinghis Khan in the character of an universal destroyer and scourge of the world. He began his rapid career, about A.D. 1371, by the subjugation of Khovaresm and Kashgar, and obliged the khan of Kaptschak to acknowledge his paramount authority. By a series of the most rapid successes he conquered Persia,

Mesopotamia,

Mesopotamia, and Georgia. Having taken and plundered Bagdad, he advanced, by the western shores of the Caspian Sea, into the khannate of Kaptschak, entered Russia, captured Asoph, and pillaged Moscow. In 1398, he undertook an expedition into India, and carried his arms beyond the Ganges. In the beginning of the fifteenth century he made an incursion into Syria, captured and pillaged Aleppo and Damascus, and proceeding into Asia Minor, ravaged the country, defeated the Turkish sultan, Bajazet, and made him prisoner. In 1404 he returned to Samarchand, his capital, where he died while making preparations for the conquest of China. Tamerlane, like Tschinghis Khan and the other Mongalian conquerors, every where marked the progress of his arms with slaughter and desolation. His conquests were astonishingly rapid; but they were as rapidly lost by his successors. Baber, however, one of his descendants and the last of the khans of Bucharia, being expelled from his native dominions, founded the empire of the Mongals in India. But this has at last experienced the general fate of the other Mongalian states, and perished by dismemberment.* Such were the singular events of the rise and fall of the Mongalo-Tartarian empire; such the catastrophe of this extraordinary people, which, except in some ruined cities and sepulchres, has now scarcely any memorial left of its former greatness; and to use the expression of Mr. Tooke, can only recollect, as in the faint representation of a dream, that it was once a nation which domineered over the world. The rapidity of the Mongul conquests have astonished posterity; but in order to account for so extraordinary an historical phœnome-

* See Historical View of Hindoostan.

non,

tion, we must consider the state of both Asia and Europe in those calamitous times. Within the whole sweep of their ravages, there was not one well compacted and warlike state capable of resisting an enemy, whose system of universal pillage attracted innumerable hordes of desperate adventurers to his standards. The causes which produced the downfal of the enormous Mongalo-Tartarian empire have already been displayed; and those that have occasioned the depopulated state of the countries which the Monguls and Tartars originally inhabited, are not a matter of difficult investigation. In order to maintain their extensive conquests, numerous colonies were necessary: new states were formed in different countries, in consequence of which an almost general transplantation and migration of the Mongul and Tartar nations took place. These were, in process of time, and in consequence of their divisions, subdued by those whom they had formerly conquered; they became gradually mixed with other nations, Russians, Turks, Chinese, and Persians, and sunk into the general mass of foreign population; so that their ancient stems were left few in number, and their original seats almost a desert. The progress and decline of knowledge and taste among the Monguls and the Tartars corresponded with the prosperity and fall of their empire. The ruins of their cities, their sepulchral monuments, and other remains of their ancient greatness, seen in Siberia, and in the districts near the Yaik and the Volga, shew, that during the prosperous state of their short-lived empire, they had acquired some knowledge of the arts, and some taste for magnificence; but their colonies having been subdued, and gradually swallowed up in the vortex of other nations, the remaining

unmixed

unmixed tribes sunk into that state of barbarism and ignorance from which they had partially emerged.

Before the middle of the sixteenth century, Siberia was scarcely known to Russia, any more than to the rest of Europe. In the reign of Ivan Vassillievitch I, the Russians had made a desultory inroad into the north-western parts of that country, and penetrated as far as the Oby.* The effects of that expedition, however, soon vanished, and until the reign of Ivan Vassillievitch II, Siberia appears to have been forgotten. At that period incidental circumstances, rather than any premeditated design, rendered it an object of attention, and opened the way to its conquest. Strogonof, a Russian merchant, who had established some salt-works in the government of Archangel, carried on a bartering trade with the inhabitants of Siberia, who brought every year great quantities of valuable furs. Strogonof having by this traffic rapidly amassed a considerable fortune, the attention of the court was again turned towards this unknown country. A body of troops was sent into Siberia, and pursuing the route of the former expedition, levied contributions on some Tartar tribes. One of their chiefs, indeed, submitted to an annual tribute to Russia of a thousand sables. The Russians, however, do not appear to have passed the Irtish, and this expedition, like the former, was not productive of any lasting effects. The conquest of Siberia, the inexhaustible magazine of furs and of metals, was reserved for Yermak, a fugitive Cossac of the Don, who was chief of a troop of banditti that infested the shores of the Caspian Sea.† Being at last over-

* Coxe's Russian Discov. Par. 3, p. 275.

† Ibid. p. 279, 280. Tooke's Hist. Russ. vol. 1, p. 292.

 powered

powered by the regular armies sent against him by the Czar, and obliged to abandon the countries on the Volga and the Don, after having lost great numbers of his troops, he made a precipitate retreat into the interior parts of the province of Kasan, and taking his route along the banks of the Kama, reached Orel, one of the Russian settlements recently planted, and governed by a relative of Strogonof. The intelligence which he there received concerning the state of the Tartars of Siberia, inspired him with the design of seeking in that quarter his safety and his fortune.

Siberia was at that time inhabited by various tribes of Tartars, and governed by a number of petty princes, of whom Kutchum Khan, a descendant of the family of Tschinghis, was the most powerful. His dominions comprised that tract of country, which now forms the south-western part of the province of Tobolsk. His capital, or principal residence was Sibir, a small fortress on the Fitish, near the present city of Tobolsk, where some of its ruins are still to be seen. Yermack having employed some time in making preparations for this expedition, began his march in the summer of 1578. The want of proper guides, and several other circumstances, greatly retarded his progress, and he was overtaken by winter before he had made any considerable conquests. On the approach of spring, his stock of provisions being nearly exhausted, he found himself under the necessity of retreating to Orel. Having received from Strogonof the necessary supplies of provisions, as well as firearms, with which his soldiers were before unprovided, he undertook in the month of June his second expedition. His troops consisted of 5000 men, adventurers inured to hardships and regardless of danger, who

placed implicit confidence in their leader, and seemed to be animated by his spirit. In numerous skirmishes with the natives, he was generally successful; and although by fatigues and sickness his troops were reduced to the small number of 500 men, with these he attacked and totally defeated Kutchum Khan, and made himself master of the important fortress of Sibir. Here he received the homage of the numerous petty princes; and the neighbouring tribes maintained during some time the appearance of perfect submission. The calm, however, was only temporary. Kutchum Khan, although expelled from his dominions, had still great influence among his former subjects; and repeated insurrections shewed, that forces more numerous than those of the conquerors, were necessary in order to retain the country in obedience. Yermak soon perceived the precariousness of his grandeur. He saw the small number to which his troops were now reduced, and he could not rely on the fidelity of his new subjects. He had, therefore, no alternative left, but either to solicit foreign assistance, or to relinquish his conquests; and in the latter case he had no secure place of retreat, nor any means of support. In this difficulty he resolved to apply to the Czar Ivan Vassillievitch, to whom he sent a deputation, with presents of the most valuable and choicest furs. He offered to resign to the czar all the vast conquests which he had made, on the condition of pardon for his past offences, and earnestly requested present succours. All this was granted. A body of 500 Russians was sent to Yermak's assistance. The war with the natives recommenced, and after numerous skirmishes, the Russians being surprised by Kut-

chum Khan, were all cut of. The bold adventurer Yermak, who appears to have been a man of extraordinary abilities, as well as of an enterprising spirit, was drowned in making his escape, and with him the Russian power for a time expired in Siberia. The conquest, however, appeared to the court of Moscow too important to be relinquished. Another body of troops was sent into the country, the former acquisitions were recovered, and rendered permanent by the construction of the fortresses of Tobolsk, Sirgut, and Tara, and Russian colonies were planted in various districts. The Tartars were every where reduced to subjection. The Russians extended their conquests on every side, and in the space of a century the whole of Siberia, as far as the Eastern Ocean, was annexed to the empire of the czars.* A still larger extent of territory would, perhaps, have been added to their dominions, and all the tribes of independent Tartary, from the south-eastern extremity of the Russian empire to the wall of China, would have experienced the same fate as the Siberian hordes, if the court of Pekin had not interposed. The approaches of the Russians towards the Chinese frontiers, occasioned a war between Russia and China. The banks of the river Amoor, where the Russians had constructed some forts, were the principal theatre of the war, which the two rival empires carried on in those distant and desolate regions, where large armies could not subsist. Their forces, therefore, were few in number, and the events of the war of trifling importance. In 1689 a treaty of peace was concluded, the boundaries of the Russian and Chinese dominions

* Coxe's Russ. Discov. p. 275 to 297.

were

were fixed, and a regular trade established between the two empires.* The peninsula of Kamtschatka was, in 1711, reduced under the dominion of Russia; and the first project for making discoveries in the Eastern Ocean was conceived and planned by Peter the Great, who only a short time before his death had, with his own hand, drawn up instructions for its execution. In pursuance to the plan laid down by that monarch, the celebrated Beering having previously made several voyages of discovery in the tempestuous sea of Kamtschatka, undertook in 1741 the grand expedition, which has eventually been productive of so important advantages to the Russian commerce, in furnishing additional supplies of valuable furs. After Beering and Tschirikof had opened the way to the islands situated between Asia and America, private adventurers engaged with ardour in similar expeditions. Since that period, the prosecution of the new discoveries has been almost entirely carried on by individuals, chiefly merchants of Irkutsk, Yakutsk, and other towns of Siberia.† The commercial intercourse between Russia and China has, in the mean while, undergone various regulations. During a long time it was greatly cramped by the restrictive operation of crown monopolies, but the late empress, Catharine II, amidst the many excellent regulations which characterize her reign, and will render her name immortal, abolished all monopoly in the fur trade, and renounced in favor of her subjects the exclusive privilege which the government enjoyed of sending caravans to Pekin.‡ In consequence of this patriotic measure, the profits

* Coxe's Russ. Discov. p. 297 to 311.

† Ibid. ch. 2, p. 8. ‡ Ibid. p. 311.

 of

of the trade have greatly increased; Kiakta is become the centre of commerce between Russia and China; and although Zurukaitu was fixed on by treaty, for another point of mercantile contact between the two empires, the business that is there transacted is inconsiderable.*

* Coxe's Russ. Discov. p. 346 and 347.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Present State, political and moral — Religion — Government — Laws— Army—Navy — Revenues—Commerce—Manufactures—Population— Political importance and relations.

Religion.]—THE religion of the Greek church, is established in Asiatic, as well as in European Russia, and both Astrachan and Tobolsk are archiepiscopal sees. Irkutsk also boasts of the same dignity. But although the Greek religion be so widely diffused in those regions, its prevalence is far from corresponding with its extension. Many of the southern Tartars are Mahometans, and others profess the religion of the Dalai Lama. But the Eastern Tartars are generally attached to Schamanism, a system founded chiefly on three leading principles, the self existence of matter, a spiritual world, and the general restitution of all things. They believe, that between men and Gods are the terigri, or spirits of the air, who direct all sublunary affairs. In this particular, their religious system resembles that of all the ancient polytheists. Schamanism appears to be intimately connected with the religion of the Dalai Lama, as also with Braminism, and is extensively diffused in Asiatic Russia. As the Schamanians believe the existence of one Supreme beneficent Being, who commits the government of the universe to inferior divinities, so they also admit one chief infernal Deity, with his subaltern agents. This malevolent Being receives into the infernal regions, all those who have offended the priesthood.

 It

It is uncertain whether Schamanism be the genuine parent, or the corrupted offspring of the Boodian and Braminical systems of India; the enquiry might be curious, but the result would perhaps be uncertain. Among barbarous tribes, metaphysical enquiries are attended with insuperable difficulties. "From the most monstrous polytheism, to the total unacquaintance with any idea of a Supreme intelligence, there are," says an ingenious writer, "innumerable turnings, in which the human intellect may stray, and the religious opinions of the savage and half savage tribes of the Russian empire, present us with no inconsiderable supplement to the history of these aberrations."*

Government, Laws, &c.]—Siberia is divided into the two great governments of Tobolsk in the west, and Irkutsk in the east. There are also the smaller provinces of Okotsk, Yakutsk, Nershink, and Kolyvan. In the south-west is the government of Caucasus, with some inferior divisions. Although the Russian laws may in general be said to predominate, various usages and ancient customs supply in a great measure among different tribes, the place of legal institutions.

Army, navy, revenues.]—Concerning the army, navy, revenues, &c. it is scarcely necessary to say, that all these matters are comprised in the account of European Russia, which is the seat of all public administration, and the centre of all Russian power. The political relations are involved in those of European Russia.

Commerce, &c.]—The commerce of Asiatic Russia, has already been described in treating of Astrachan and Kiakta, its two principal foci, by which it is

* Tooke's View Russ. Emp. vol. 1, p. 511.

carried

carried on with Persia, Buckaria, India, and China. But it may not here be amiss to add, that the Chinese trade is of very great importance to Russia.* It is this commerce, which, by opening so lucrative a market to the furs, renders Siberia, Kamtschatka, and the adjacent isles, so valuable to that empire. By this trade the Russians are also supplied with many valuable articles, which they would otherwise be obliged to purchase at a much higher rate from the European nations.

Manners and csutoms.]—Any attempt to describe the manners and customs of the numerous nations which compose the population of Asiatic Russia, would far exceed the limits assigned to this compendium.† Of this, however, the Mongols, the remains of that extraordinary people, which formerly changed the destinies of a great part of the world, are the most worthy of particular attention. Those of the Russian empire are only nomadic, their herds consisting of horses, camels, oxen, and sheep. When pasturage fails, they strike their tents, which generally happens ten or fifteen times in a year, proceeding in summer to the northern, and in winter to the sonthern wilds. The Mongols are somewhat short in stature, with a flat visage, small oblique eyes, thick lips, a short chin, and little beard. Their hair is black, and their complexions a darkish brown, but the women are tolerably fair. The Mongols are docile, hospitable, beneficent, active, and voluptuous. They are also

* Coxe's Russ. Dis. p. 342.

† The population has already been stated at about 3,000,000 and a half. Tooke ubi supra. The whole Russian empire comprises at least eighty distinct nations, different in descent, language, and manners. Tooke's View Russ. Emp. book 2. sect. 5.

remarkable

remarkable for the quickness of their sight and apprehension. They are divided into imaks, comprising from 150 to 300 families, and each imak has its particular chief. They generally profess the Schamanian religion, or that of the Dalai Lama. Their religious books are in the language of Tangut or Thibet. The bodies of their princes and chief priests are buried with great solemnity. The Kalmucks are of Mongalian descent, and in person and manners greatly resemble that people.* They are divided into three classes, the nobles, the clergy, and the common people. On the first summons every man is obliged to appear on horseback before the prince. Their weapons are bows, sabres, lances, and sometimes fire-arms. The more opulent warriors are clothed in coats of mail; but they can make very little resistance against regular armies. But the picture of the physical and moral circumstances, the manners and customs, the languages, dresses, dwellings, &c. of the various nations which inhabit the Asiatic, as well as the European part of the Russian empire, is too motley and various to admit of a particular delineation. So extraordinary a collection of nations and tribes united in one vast political body, is a curious phœnomenon, and presents a singular spectacle, exhibiting all the various modifications, of which human nature, influenced by various causes, is susceptible.†

* For the manners, customs, &c. of the Mongols, Kalmucks, and Burats, see Pallas, vol. 1.

† For a more particular description of all the various nations of Asiatic, as well as European Russia, see Tooke's View Russ. Emp. vol. 1. book 2.

CHINA.

CHINA.

CHAP. I.

Situation—Extent—Boundaries—Face of the Country—Mountains—Rivers—Canals—Lakes—Mineralogy—Mineral Waters—Soil—Climate—Vegetable Productions—Zoology—Natural Curiosities—Antiquities and Artificial Curiosities.

THE Chinese empire must be considered, both in a geographical and political sense, as consisting of two great parts, the first being China Proper, and the other Chinese Tartary. The ancient country of China shall therefore be the first subject of our description.

Situation.]—China is situated between 20° and 42° north latitude, and between 98° and 123° east longitude, extending from the great wall in the north, to the China Sea on the south, in length about 1140 geographical, or 1330 English miles, and about 1320 geographical, or 1420 English miles in breadth, from the shores of the Pacific Ocean in the east, to the confines of Thibet on the west. This vast extent of country is computed to contain not less than 1,297,999 square miles, with the almost incredible population of 333,000,000 of inhabitants.

Face of the country.]—The face of a country so little accessible to travellers, cannot be described with any precision. According to such confined descriptions as we possess, China appears to be in general a level champaign,

champaign, intersected in various directions with many large rivers, with some chains of granitic and calcareous mountains. The peculiar style of the buildings, and the uncommon form of the trees and plants, contribute to give the country a picturesque appearance. The late British embassy* proceeding from the Gulph of Pichelee, entered the Pei-ho in about 39° north latitude, and sailed up that river as far as the city of Tongtchoo, within twelve miles of Pekin. The short remainder of the journey was by land. In this progress they perceived nothing but low marshy lands, with very little cultivation.† The boundaries of property were determined by trenches, without any hedgerows. There were few trees to be seen, except near the villages, which made a very mean appearance, the houses being only one story high, with mud walls and thatched roofs.‡ Such was the aspect of the country for the space of near ninety miles from the mouth of the Pei-ho, to the city of Tiensing. From this place to Tongtchoo, nearly the same distance, the country began to assume the appearance of a variegated champaign, but scantily wooded, and the villages had the same mean appearance. Grain was more frequently seen than in the preceding part of their voyage up the river; and considerable tracts of pasture ground intervened between the villages, but seemed to be scantily stocked with cattle. From Tong-tchoo to Pekin, the great road lay across an open sandy plain. The middle part of the road is paved with granite. This pave-

* Lord Macartney's Embassy in 1793.

† This is Mr. Barrow's account, Sir George Staunton represents many parts of it as well cultivated, vol. 2, p. 176, 178, 205.

‡ A few of the houses were large, painted and variously ornamented. Sir George Staunton, vol. 2, ch. 2. p. 155.

 ment

ment is about eighteen or twenty feet broad: the stones are from six to sixteen feet long, and of a proportional breadth. Every one of these enormous flagstones must have been brought at least sixty miles from the quarries of granite on the borders of Tartary.* The houses, built of clay, or half-burnt bricks, made a very contemptible appearance to the very gates of Pekin. Our author observes, that this uniform plain of China affords little interesting to the traveller.† On their return from the Chinese capital, the country presented the same aspect of extensive levels and swamps until they approached the Yellow river. Here the surface was broken into hills and valleys, every inch was cultivated, and the face of the country was covered with cities, towns, villages, and temples.‡ To the southward of the Yellow river, for the space of ninety miles, almost as far as the Yang-tse-kiang, the country is low and level, abounding in lakes and swamps. Through the whole of this distance the grand canal, which is 200 feet in width, is confined within stone walls, the surface of its water being, in many parts, not less than twenty feet above the level of the country. In this low and marshy district, little cultivation appears, but abundance of towns and villages, the inhabitants of which subsist by fishing. Mr. Barrow supposes the extent of country exposed to the inundations of the Yellow river, to be equal to

* Barrow's China, p. 70, &c. to 91.

† Ibid. p. 492. Sir George Staunton remarks, that scarcely a cloud had been seen in the sky, nor so much as a hillock in the country. Staunton, vol. 2. p. 245.

‡ Barrow's Trav. in China, p. 490, 501, 505, 507, 508. The Yellow river, where it receives the canal, is three quarters of a mile wide, p. 511.

that

that of all England.* Great sums of money are expended on its embankments, which cost, during the reign of the emperor Kaung-Shee, not less than 1,000,000*l.* sterling.† On the borders of the Yang-tse-kiang, the country again improves. This river is about two miles wide, and contains many beautiful islands covered with verdure. The banks on each side are covered with towns and houses, and as far as the eye can reach, presents a varied and lively prospect. In the same manner on the banks of the canal, cities, towns, and villages, are continued without intermission. Numbers of stone bridges, of one, two, or three arches, are thrown across the canal. The face of the country is beautifully diversified with hill and dale, and every part is in the highest degree of cultivation. The chief produce, is that particular species of cotton known in Europe by the name of nankin. This beautiful and picturesque scenery continues as far as the neighbourhood of the great lake Po-yang. For the space of ten miles round this lake the country exhibits a complete picture of desolation. Nothing is seen but a wild waste of reeds, bull-rushes, &c. varied only with stagnant pools of water, and not a human dwelling is there to be found.‡ Proceeding farther to the south, the country rising into mountains, resumes a picturesque, and even romantic, although barren appearance. In the province of Kiang-see, the surface becomes more uniform, and better adapted to the purposes of agriculture. The summit of the mountains of Melin, which forms the boundary between the provinces of Kiang-see and Quantung, or Canton, commands a most delightful prospect into

* Barrow, p. 515, 516. † Id. ibid. † Ibid. p. 517.

the

the latter province. Some mountainous tracts in the province of Canton, present a sublime appearance.*

Mountains.]—From all our maps, it appears that China contains several mountainous ranges, especially in the western parts towards Thibet. But notwithstanding the ample description which Du Halde has given of this empire, we have not yet any precise knowledge of the Chinese mountains. Du Halde's information is vague and obscure; and D'Anville has not much elucidated the subject. That excellent geographer, however, is not to be blamed, he could only construct his maps according to the measure of his information. Nor could it be expected that the late embassy, whose route was confined to a certain track, should throw any great light on a subject, that requires a long space of time, and an ample survey, especially as Lord Macartney and his suite travelled by the rivers and canals, and consequently in the most level districts. The number of Europeans, however, who have visited the interior of China is so small, and those to whom that privilege has been granted, have had so many important objects to engross their time and attention, that we must be contented with very defective information concerning this interesting country.

Rivers.]—China is pervaded by two of the most principal rivers that are known on the face of the globe. These are the Hoan-ho, or the Yellow river, so called from its muddy waters, and the Kianku, sometimes denominated the Blue river, but known by various names in the different provinces through which it directs its course. The Hoan-ho originates from two Tartarian lakes, situated in about 35° north latitude, and 97°

* Barrow, p. 593, 594.

east

east longitude.† Its course is extremely winding, being first north-east as far as 42° of latitude, then due east, and afterwards southerly, till it reaches nearly the latitude of its source: it then pursues an easterly direction till it discharges itself into the Yellow Sea. The whole length of its course may be estimated at about 2,150 English miles. At the distance of about seventy miles from its mouth, it is crossed by the imperial canal, and its breadth is there somewhat more than a mile, but the depth not exceeding ten feet.† The velocity of the stream appears to be about seven or eight miles per hour.‡

The Kian-ku rises according to the most approved maps, about 200 miles to the west of the sources of the Hoan-ho, and winds nearly as far to the south as the latter does to the north. Its course is also extremely devious, but at last taking a direction nearly due east, it washes the walls of Nankin, and falls into the Yellow Sea about 100 miles to the south of the Hoan-ho. The whole course of the Kian-ku is estimated at about 2,200 English miles. These great rivers receive numerous tributary streams, of which the enumeration, if possible, would be tedious. But, in fact, we have very little accurate knowledge of the rivers any more than the mountains of China.

Canals.]—In regard to inland navigation, this vast empire displays a work that stands unrivalled in the history of the world. Mr. Barrow says, that " in point of magnitude, our most extensive inland navigation of

† Staunton's Embassy to China, vol. 3. p. 232—Arrowsmith's Map—and Du Halde, vol, 4. p. 162.

† Staunton, vol. 3, p. 234. Barrow computes the breadth at three-quarters of a mile, p. 511.

‡ Barrow, ubi supra.

England

England can no more be compared with the grand trunk that intersects China, than a park or garden fish-pond to the great lake of Winandermere. Of this stupendous work the same writer gives the following description: " All the rivers of note in China fall from the high lands of Tartary, which lie to the northward of Thibet, crossing the plains of this empire, in their descent to the sea from west to east. The inland navigation being carried from north to south, cuts these rivers at right angles, the smaller streams of which terminating in it, afford a constant supply of water; and the three great rivers, the Eu-bo, to the north, the Yellow-river towards the middle, and the Yang-tse-kiang to the south, intersecting the canal, carry off the superfluous water to the sea. The former, therefore, are the feeders, and the latter the dischargers of the great trunk of the canal. A number of difficulties must have arisen in accommodating the general level of the canal to the several levels of the feeding streams; for, notwithstanding all the favorable circumstances of the face of the country, it has been found necessary, in many places, to cut down to the depth of sixty or seventy feet below the surface; and in others to raise mounds of earth upon lakes, and swamps, and marshy grounds, of such a length and magnitude, that nothing short of the absolute command over multitudes could have accomplished an undertaking of which the immensity is exceeded only by the great wall. These stupendous embankments are sometimes carried through lakes of several miles in diameter, between which the water is forced up to a height considerably above that of the lake; and in such situations we sometimes observed this enormous aqueduct gliding along at the rate of three

three miles an hour. Few parts of it are level; in some places it has little or no current: one day we had it setting to the southward at the rate of one, two, or three miles an hour, the next to the northward; and frequently on the same day we found it stationary, and running in opposite directions. This balancing of the level was effected by flood-gates, thrown across at certain distances, to elevate or depress the height of the water a few inches, as might appear to be necessary; and these stoppages are simply planks sliding in grooves, that are cut into the sides of two stone abutments, which in these places contract the canal to the width of about thirty feet. There is not a single lock, nor, except these, a single interruption to a continued navigation of 600 miles."*

"The canal," says Sir George Staunton, "was traced often in the beds of ancient rivers, which it resembles in the irregularity of its depth, the sinuosity of its course, and the breadth of its surface, where not narrowed by a flood-gate."†

The Tartars pretend that this canal was first opened in the thirteenth century under the Mongul government. The reason assigned for projecting this great work is extremely rational. The Chinese are unskilful navigators, and equally unskilled in naval architecture. The Chinese seas are tremendously tempestuous; the hurricanes, called Ta-fung, sometimes blowing with such vehemence, that, according to the assertion of an experienced and intelligent commander of an East-Indiaman, quoted by Mr. Barrow, "Were it possible to blow 10,000 trumpets, and beat as many drums, on the forecastle of an Indiaman in the height

* Barrow's China, p. 336, 337.

† Sir George Staunton's Embassy to China, vol. 3, p. 201.

of

of a Ta-fung, neither the sound of one nor the other could be heard by a person on the quarter-deck of the same ship." In fact, great numbers of Chinese vessels are lost in these heavy gales of wind; and 10,000 or 12,000 persons from the port of Canton are supposed to perish annually by shipwreck.* The losses among the ships that were employed to transport the taxes paid in kind, from the southern provinces to Pekin, are said to have been so great as to have induced the successors of Tschinghis, or Genghis Khan, to open a direct communication between the two extremities of the empire by means of the rivers and canals; an undertaking that reflects the highest honour on the Monguls. The Chinese, however, say, that these conquerors only repaired the old works, which were fallen to decay. The greatest probability, indeed, is, that the canal had been made prior to the Mongul invasion; but that having been neglected under the administration of a series of weak and effeminate princes, Kublai Khan, after having completed the conquest of China, caused it to undergo a thorough repair. Mr. Barrow says, that "whether it has been constructed by the Chinese or the Tartars, the conception of such an undertaking, and the manner in which it is executed, imply a degree of science and ingenuity, beyond what I suspect we should now find in the country, either in one or other of these people."† The same writer in another place observes, that in approaching the Yellow River the imperial canal presents the grandest inland navigation in the world, being nearly 1,000 feet in breadth, and confined on each side by stone quays, built with massy blocks of grey marble, mixed with

* Barrow's China, p. 38—41.

† Trav. in China, p. 336.

 others

others of granite. This immense aqueduct, thus forced up several feet above the surface of the country by those stupendous embankments, has numberless canals branching out in every direction; and for several miles, on each side, one continued town extends to the point of its junction with the river.* To enumerate all the canals in China would be an endless task, as they branch out into every province, and extending in every direction to the towns and large villages. The inland navigation of China, in fine, is unparalleled on the face of the globe. This vast country being intersected from west to east by two large rivers, its third intersection, from north to south, by the imperial canal, renders the communication between the different provinces of the empire commodious and complete.

Lakes.]—China presents several lakes of considerable magnitude. Several of these are described by Du Halde, and some of them by the late embassy. The lake of Tong-tint-hou, in the province of Hou-quang, is represented as more than 160 miles in circumference. The extensive lake of the Wee-chang-hoo, is described as a singular scene of nature and industry,† and that of Taichoo is surrounded by picturesque hills, and covered with pleasure-boats. On one of the lakes near the grand canal was seen the Chinese method of fishing, with a species of cormorants. Each boat had ten or twelve of these birds so completely trained, as to seize and bring up to the surface fishes equal, at least, in weight, to themselves. In the course of three days' navigation on the canal,

* Travels in China, p. 508.

† Staunton's Embassy, vol. 3, p. 221.

were

were seen several thousands of these boats and rafts employed in this kind of fishing.*

Mineralogy.]—China has mines of gold, silver, copper and iron, mercury, lapis lazuli, jasper, loadstone, granite, and various kinds of marble. The Chinese gold is chiefly derived from the sands of rivulets, which descend from the mountains towards the confines of Thibet. That metal, however, is seldom used but in gilding, none but the emperor having any gold plate. The mines of silver are said to be numerous; but few of them are worked through the fear of impeding the progress of agriculture, an apprehension which appears to be groundless, if the country be so populous and the people so poor as they are represented; and especially if Mr. Barrow's conjecture be just, that the introduction of machinery into China, for the purpose of facilitating and expediting labour, would, in the present state of the country, be attended with the most pernicious and distressing consequences, by diminishing the quantity of employment.† In such a state of things, mining might open new resources to industry. Coal abounds in many of the northern provinces; but Pekin is supplied with this article, at a very dear rate, from the mountains of Tartary. Among the minerals must be reckoned tutenag, which is a native mixture of iron and zinc, and seems to be a production peculiar to China. Our knowledge of the mineralogy of a portion of the globe so little explored by Europeans, must, however, be very defective.

* Barrow, p. 506, 507. A considerable number of lakes is indicated in D'Anville's Map. See also Staunton, vol. 3, p. 211.

† Barrow's China, p. 513. Sir George Staunton, however, remarks, that the Chinese have a machine for winnowing corn, vol. 2, p. 279.

Mineral waters.]—The mineral waters of so extensive a country, are, in all probability, numerous; but none that are of a particular celebrity seem to be noticed by travellers.

Soil.]—It is superfluous to say, that in so wide a portion of the surface of the earth, the soil must admit of every variety. In general, it is considered as fertile; but in the northern part of the country, in which the capital is situated, it appears to be light, sandy, and poor; and in many parts, through which the embassy travelled, it appeared marshy and unfit for cultivation.

Climate.]—The climate of a country, extending from within the tropic of Cancer to the forty-second degree of north latitude, must be as various as the soil. The southern parts about Canton are, like other regions under the same parallels, extremely hot. Advancing towards the north the climate grows more temperate; but the northern provinces, although subject to great heats in the summer, experience a rigorous winter.* In that season, the average degree of the thermometer at Pekin, is under twenty in the night, and considerably below the freezing point, even in the day. According to the accounts of the Dutch embassy, in 1795, it appears that a very large portion of China is exposed to no small severity of weather during the winter months. The air, however, is, in general, serene; and from what little knowledge we have of the country, appears to be salubrious.

Vegetable productions.]—The vegetable productions of China, except such as may be deemed common, are too little known to furnish matter for a copious description,

* Staunton's Embassy to China, vol. 3, p. 157. In summer, the thermometer is generally above 80°, sometimes as high as 90°. Barrow, p. 554.

description. Among those which are of the greatest importance, as general objects of cultivation and articles of human sustenance, or clothing, are grain, culinary vegetables, and fruits, tea, sugar, cotton, silk, and indigo.* Tobacco also is produced in many parts of China. Among the various kinds of grain, are considerable quantities of wheat; and when the British embassy returned from Pekin, the young crops had a promising appearance. But rice is the staple product of Chinese agriculture, and, in most parts of the empire, the common food of the people. It is therefore abundantly cultivated in such places as afford a command of water. The usual average produce of corn lands, is reckoned from ten to fifteen for one, and of rice, from twenty-five to thirty. The Chinese seem to have no just notion of improving the quality of their fruits. The oranges are naturally so good as to have no need of improvement; but the European fruits, as apples, pears, plumbs, peaches, and apricots, are of an indifferent quality. The grapes, however, are some of them good. Mr. Barrow expresses his astonishment at the small profits that must accrue to the cultivators of the tea plant, in proportion to the quantity of labour which it requires.† "The preparations of some of the finer kinds of this article, are said to require that every leaf should be rolled singly by the hand; particularly such as are exported to the European markets. Besides this, there are many processes, such as steeping, drying, turning, and packing, after it has been plucked off the shrub, leaf by leaf. Yet

* Barrow, p. 556, 560, 571, 572. The province of Tche-Kiang, between the parallels of 28° and 34° 30′ north latitude, seems to be one of the more productive of silk; most of the people are clothed in silk. p. 572.

† Ibid. p. 525, p. 569.

the

the first cost in the tea provinces cannot be more than from 4*d.* to 2*s.* per pound, when it is considered that the ordinary teas stand the East-India Company to no more than 8*d.* per pound, and the very best only to 2*s.* 8*d.* Nothing can more clearly point out the patient and unremitting labour of the Chinese, than the preparation of this article for the market. It is a curious circumstance that a body of merchants in England should furnish employment, as might easily be made appear, to more than 1,000,000 subjects of a nation that affects to despise merchants, and throws every obstacle in the way of commercial intercourse."*

Many other productions, of inferior consequence, might here be noted. Several of the Chinese flowers and plants are totally different from any that are known in Europe, although some of them have been introduced into our gardens. Timber is an article of which there seems to be a general scarcity. The great population, and the consequent extension of agriculture, appear to have, at an early period, extirpated the primitive forests.

It will not here be amiss to take a slight view of the agriculture of China, which has been so celebrated by numerous writers. Among the missionaries it has been a grand subject of panegyric; and our learned and judicious countryman, Sir George Staunton, speaks of it with applause.† Agriculture, indeed, has been held in high estimation in this country. The Chinese government, considering it as the true source of national wealth and prosperity, has, in all ages, bestowed the first honours on its professors. The husbandman is here regarded, not only as a useful, but as an honourable member of society. In China, both the

* Barrow, p. 572, 573.

† Staunton, vol. 3, p. 306, &c.

5 priests

priests and the soldiers are agriculturists. The emperor is sole proprietor of the soil; but the tenant is never turned out of possession so long as he continues to pay his rent, which is stated at one tenth of what the land is supposed to be capable of yielding, and is for the most part paid in kind. On these terms the Chinese agriculturists consider their estates as their own, and frequently let lands to other tenants on condition of receiving half of the produce, out of which the upper tenant, or as he might be properly called, the proprietor, pays the rent to the emperor. A great part of the poorer peasantry cultivate their lands on these terms.

The emperor being thus regarded as the first and principal agriculturist of China, sets an annual example of the veneration due to the most useful of all professions, and the first and most important department of human industry. Every year at the vernal equinox, the Chinese monarch, after a solemn offering to the God of Heaven and earth, performs the ceremony of holding the plough, an example in which he is followed by all the viceroys, governors, and other great officers in every part of the empire. This institution, whatever may have been its origin, is extremely well calculated for the encouragement of the labouring peasantry, whose profession being thus honorably patronised, cannot fail of being followed with greater energy and cheerfulness, than if it received no such marks of distinction.*

" In China," says Mr. Barrow, " there are no immense estates, grasping nearly the whole of a district, no monopolizing farmers, nor dealers in grain. Every

* This ceremony is said to be nearly coeval with the monarchy. Du Halde, vol. 3, p. 20.

one

one can bring his produce to a free and open market. No fisheries are let out to farm. Every subject is entitled to the free and uninterrupted enjoyment of the sea, of the coasts and the æstuaries, of the lakes and rivers. There are no lords of the manor with exclusive privileges; no lands set apart for the feeding of beasts or birds, for the profit or pleasure of particular persons; every one may kill game on his own grounds, and on the public commons. Yet with all these seeming advantages, there are rarely three successive years without a famine in one province or another." The same writer ascribes these famines to the equal division of lands, to the system of cultivation, and to the nature of the products. In regard to the first of these causes, he observes, that if every man has an opportunity of renting as much land as will support his family with food and clothing, he will have no occasion to go to market for the prime necessaries of life; and such being the case in China, those first necessaries are, therefore, unsaleable articles, except in supplying the demands of great cities. The peasant, therefore, having brought under tillage as much land as will supply his family with grain, seldom looks any farther, and consequently as there are no great farmers, nor corn dealers who store their grain in order to bring it into the market in a time of scarcity, whenever, by any accident a failure of the crops takes place in any particular province, there is no relief to be expected from any other part of the country. In such seasons, the only resource is that of the government opening its magazines. But the stores there laid up, consisting only of a tenth part of the annual produce, out of which the subsistence of the officers and soldiers has already been deducted,

the remainder is seldom adequate to the wants of the people. The most dreadful insurrections frequently ensue; those who may escape the scourge of famine, often fall by the sword; and in these cases a whole province is sometimes depopulated. Thus the equal division of lands, which in theory appears so plausible, is attended with this serious evil, that it precludes every idea of laying up stores for a time of scarcity. In regard to the second cause, the mode of cultivation, Mr. Barrow says, "When I mention that two thirds of the small quantity of land under tillage is cultivated with the spade or the hoe, or otherwise by manual labour, without the aid of draught cattle, or skilful machinery, it will be readily conceived how very small a portion each family will be likely to employ every year."* The third cause of famines is, by our author, ascribed to the general and extensive cultivation of rice, This, indeed, may perhaps be one of the principal sources of those calamities with which different provinces of China are so often and so dreadfully afflicted. Rice is, throughout the greatest part of China, the principal object of cultivation, and the principal food of the inhabitants. This grain, however, although it yields abundant returns in favorable seasons, is from various causes more liable to fail than most others. And it is observed, that famines are less frequent in the northern provinces, where a greater quantity of wheat, millet, and pulse is cultivated.†

The remarks made by Mr. Barrow, relative to the small quantity of land under tillage in China, excites

* Barrow, p. 585, 586.

† Mr. Barrow supposes, that if potatoes and guinea corn were adopted as the common food of the Chinese instead of rice, the crops would never fail, and famines would cease. Trav. in China, p. 586.

ideas very different from those which arise from reading the pompous accounts which have been generally given of the Chinese agriculture; and the view of the countries through which the embassy passed, gives great weight to his observations. "If," says this writer, "an idea may be formed from what we saw in the course of our journey, and from the accounts given of the other provinces, I should conclude, that nearly one fourth part of the whole country consists of lakes, and low, sour, swampy grounds, which are totally uncultivated."* The whole territorial right being vested in the sovereign, the waste lands of course belong to the crown; but any person, by giving notice to the proper magistrate, may acquire a property in those, on condition of paying the tenth part of the estimated produce into the imperial magazines. Such a system might seem extremely favorable to the extension of agriculture; but it may in a great measure be counteracted by the minute division of property, and the poverty of the people. Individuals possessing only a small capital, cannot undertake any improvements on an extensive scale. They may inclose small spaces of waste ground in favorable situations; but in a country circumstanced like China, the embankment of rivers, the draining of extensive marshes, &c. can be accomplished only at the public expence, and must be the work of the government. In certain situations, the Chinese have levelled the sides of mountains into a succession of terraces, a mode of cultivation thus described by a judicious and intelligent observer. "When the face of a hill or mountain, is not nearly perpendicular to the level surface of the earth, the slope is converted into a

* Barrow, p. 567.

number

number of terraces one above another, each of which is supported by mounds of stone. By this management, it is not uncommon to see the whole face of a mountain completely cultivated to the summit. These stages are not confined to the culture of any particular vegetable. Pulse, grain, yams, sweet potatoes, onions, carrots, turnips, and a variety of culinary plants, are produced upon them. A reservoir is sunk in the top of the mountain. The rain water collected in it, is conveyed successively to the different terraces. In spots too rugged, barren, steep, or high for raising other plants, the camelia sesanqua, and divers firs, especially the larch, are cultivated with success.* This practice is frequently noticed by the missionaries, and it has ever been represented as unexampled in Europe, and peculiar to the Chinese. Many specimens of this terrace agriculture, however, are seen in the Pais de Vaud, and also in the Cevennes of Languedoc;† and it appears far from being common in China. In the direct road by which the embassy travelled, instances of this mode of cultivation only twice occurred, and those on so small a scale as scarcely to deserve notice. The eagerness of the Chinese in collecting every species of manure, is noticed by both our late British writers. They drag the rivers, the canals, and pools of water, for mud and slime; and they preserve with great care all kinds of urine, in which it is the universal practice to steep every kind of seeds previously to their being sown.‡ This method is supposed to have the effect of hastening the growth of the plants, as also of defending

* Staunton, vol. 3, p. 306, &c.

† See article France in this work.

‡ This practice is also common in several parts of England.

them

them against the insects which lie concealed in the ground. The immersion of the seeds in a mixture of lime and urine, is said to preserve the Chinese turnips from the attacks of the fly, which, in some countries, are so fatal to the crop.* "The collection of manure," says Sir George Staunton, "is an object of so much attention with the Chinese, that a prodigious number of old men and women, as well as of children incapable of much other labour, are constantly employed about the streets, public roads, banks of canals and rivers, with baskets tied before them, and having in their hands small wooden rakes to pick up the dung of animals, and offals of any kind that may answer the purpose of manure."† Mr. Barrow exhibits the same representation of this part of Chinese industry. Near all the houses are large earthen jars, sunk in the ground, for collecting and preserving every material that is convertible into manure. "Whenever," says this author, "our barges halted, and the soldiers or servants found it necessary to step on shore, they were always pursued to their places of retirement by these collectors of food for vegetables. It may literally be said, that in this country nothing is suffered to be lost. The profession of shaving is followed by vast numbers in China. As the whole head is shaved, except a small lock behind, few, if any, are able to operate on themselves. And as hair is considered as an excellent manure, every barber carries with him a small bag to collect the spoils of his razor."‡ The extraordinary care of the Chinese in collecting and preserving the most trifling materials that can be converted into manure, may appear to the European

* Barrow, p. 564. † Staunton, ubi supra.

‡ Barrow, p. 564.

agriculturist

agriculturist somewhat astonishing, and even in some degree ludicrous. But it must be considered, that from the want of cattle, manure is exceedingly scarce, and is consequently of much greater value in China than in most other countries.

Both Sir George Staunton and Mr. Barrow applaud the industry and skill of the Chinese in mixing their soils, and in the irrigation of their lands.* The machine employed in clearing the rice from the husks, is the same as that used in Egypt, with this only difference in the mode of working it—that in the latter country it is put in motion by oxen, but in China generally by water. The bamboo, or Persian wheel, used in China for irrigating the ground, appears to be nearly the same as that which was in use among the ancient Egyptians. It is still employed in Syria and Persia, from the latter of which countries its name is derived. In some parts of the route of the embassy, every plantation had one, and some two, of these wheels. The construction of the machine, which is exceedingly simple, requires little expence, and its operations require no attendance. Yet it is capable of rising, to the height of forty feet, 150 tuns of water in the space of twenty-four hours. The plough commonly used in China is of a simple construction, and greatly inferior to the worst that is seen in England. The three different modes of sowing grain by drilling, dibbling, and broad-cast, are all in use: the first is the most general; the second is only used in small patches of tillage; but the last being considered as wasting too much seed, is seldom put in practice.†

* For an excellent account of the Chinese agriculture, see Sir George Staunton, p. 307, &c.

† Barrow, p. 554.

The

The agriculture of China has long been represented in an imposing point of view; but it certainly does not merit the extravagant eulogiums of which it has often been the subject. "A very erroneous opinion," says Mr. Barrow, "seems to have been entertained in Europe, with regard to the skill of the Chinese in agriculture. Industrious they certainly are in an eminent degree; but their labour does not always appear to be bestowed with judgment. The instruments, in the first place, of which they make use, are incapable of performing the operations of husbandry to the greatest advantage. In the deepest and best soils, their plough seldom cuts to the depth of four inches, so that they sow from year to year upon the same soil, without being able to turn up new earth, and to bury the worn out mould to refresh itself. Supposing them, however, to be supplied with ploughs of the best construction, we can scarcely conceive that their mules and asses, and old women, would be equal to the task of drawing them."* The minute division of property, the poverty of the people, and their want of domestic cattle, are circumstances closely connected; and from these all the chief defects observable in the Chinese system of agriculture, seem to proceed. In China, nine tenths of the peasantry may be considered as cottagers, and having few cattle, millions of them indeed, as Mr. Barrow observes, none at all, it cannot be expected that the whole country should be in the best possible state of cultivation. The want of cattle is indeed a grand impediment in Chinese agriculture. In the province of Kiang-see, the English embassy saw a woman yoked by traces to a plough, while a man, either her husband or her master, had the easier task of holding it with one hand,

* Barrow, p. 566.

hand, and drilling in the seed with the other.* The industry of the Chinese in collecting manures, in mixing the soils, and in keeping their crops clear of weeds by diligent hoeing, shew that, on a small scale, they are excellent husbandmen. "As horticulturists," says Mr. Barrow, "they may perhaps be allowed a considerable share of merit; but on the great scale of agriculture, they are certainly not to be mentioned with many European nations."† A circumstance may here be mentioned, which is exceedingly detrimental to agriculture, and which tends to throw considerable light on the state of society in China, notwithstanding the boasted police of that celebrated empire. In almost every part of the country it is the general practice of the Chinese to live in towns and villages, between which the intervening ground is often without a single habitation. The consequence of such a system is, that although the lands adjoining to the village are kept in the highest state of cultivation, those at a distance are suffered to remain almost useless; for having scarcely any beasts of burden, it would be an endless piece of human labour, to carry, for several miles, the manure which the ground might require, and to bring back the produce to the village. The reason assigned by the Chinese for this custom of crowding together in towns and villages, with scarcely any detached farms, is the dread of the bands of robbers that infest the weak and unprotected parts of the country. These robbers, who in formidable gangs plunder the peasantry, are sometimes so numerous as to threaten the most populous cities, a circumstance which is far from corresponding with the high

* Barrow, p. 541. † Ibid. p. 567.

notions that have been entertained of the Chinese government, and of the morals of the people. In this view of the agriculture of China, I have taken the liberty of enlarging somewhat more than usual; but in treating a subject of such celebrity, so interesting, and so little understood, some degree of prolixity may appear excuseable.

Zoology.]—The zoology of this empire is a subject of far inferior importance. The scarcity of cattle has already been remarked. China, indeed, has the same domestic animals as are common in Europe; but they are few in number, and of an inferior kind.* In every province of the empire, horses are scarce, and of a miserable breed, destitute of elegance, and incapable of much labour. It might be expected, that in a country, where a regular establishment of cavalry is kept up, to an amount that seems almost incredible, some attention would be paid to the breed of their horses. This, however, is so far from being the case, that a Scotch poney, wild from the mountains, is in a fit condition for a regiment of their cavalry. Those which are kept by men in office, are equally neglected. The Tatarian horses, which compose the emperor's stud, are said to be not deficient in point of size, beauty, or spirit. But the Chinese have no idea of the mode of treatment which this noble animal requires, nor of any method of improving the breed. Their horned cattle are few in number, and of an indifferent kind. The Chinese, therefore, have little milk, and seem to be unacquainted with butter and

* Sir George Staunton remarks, that there are few inclosures in China, and that the small number of cattle renders them unnecessary, vol. 2. p. 279.

cheese.

cheese.* The camel and the dromedary are not unknown in China; but as they are not much used, they do not appear to be numerous. In regard to the wild animals, the Chinese zoology appears to be a more copious subject. It does not comprehend the lion; but there are wild boars, buffaloes, bears, tigers, &c. As China, however, is so extremely populous, and so little encumbered with woods, the ferocious kind of animals cannot be supposed to abound as in countries of thin population, and overspread with extensive forests. The number of ferocious animals constantly diminishes as that of the human species increases. The musk deer is a native of this country as well as of Thibet. The ornithology of China would furnish a subject of various and splendid description. Many of the Chinese birds display in their plumage the most beautiful colours: the same remark may be extended to numbers of their winged insects.

Natural curiosities.]—The natural curiosities which this vast empire may be supposed to present, remain unexplored by European travellers, and consequently lost to scientific observation.

Artificial curiosities.]—In the most ancient community, and the most populous empire existing among men, we might naturally expect to find numerous works of art, and splendid monuments of ancient grandeur. But here expectation is strangely disappointed. China presents no ancient palaces, no monuments of architecture or sculpture, that can arrest the attention of the traveller, except by the novelty of their appearance. The celebrated wall on the fron-

* Sir George Staunton says, that the horses of Tong-choo-foo, were strong and bony, but allows that the breed was not improved by care, vol. 2. p. 277.

 tier

tier of Tartary, the walls of the numerous cities, with their square towers and lofty gates, and a few old pagodas, or temples, are its only architectural antiquities. When these are excepted, Mr. Barrow thinks that scarcely " a single building now seen in the whole extent of China, has withstood the action of three centuries. This country, however, displays one stupendous relic of ancient grandeur, to which, in respect of magnitude and quantity of materials, the world affords no parallel. The celebrated frontier wall, which is deservedly considered as one of the most astonishing labours of art, extends 1500 miles in length; being carried in some places over mountains nearly a mile in perpendicular height, in others across deep vallies, and sometimes over wide rivers, by the means of arches. In many parts it is doubled, and even sometimes trebled, for the security of important passes; and at the distance of almost every 100 yards, is a massy tower or bastion. In some places, where the danger of invasion was supposed to be less, it is not equally strong. This wall, in that part where it was crossed by the British embassy in the way to Gehol, is twenty-five feet high, and fifteen thick at the top. The towers are square: some of them are about forty-eight feet high, and forty feet wide. The stone used in the foundations, angles, &c. is generally a grey granite. The wall consists of a mound of earth, cased on both sides with brick or stone.* The mass of matter contained in this stupendous fabric, is so enormous, that, according to a calculation of Mr. Barrow, supposing the dimensions throughout to be nearly the same as where it was crossed by the British embassy, the materials of all the dwelling-houses in Great Britain are

* Staunton, vol. 2. p. 360.

scarcely

scarcely equivalent to it, in solid content.* The same writer observes, that the whole of the masonry and brick-work in London does not exceed the quantity contained in the massy towers of brick and stone, exclusive of the wall itself. But Father Crebillon, who had travelled the whole length of this extraordinary fortification, says, that from the Eastern Ocean to the entrance into the province of Chansi, an extent of about 600 miles, it is indeed of brick and stone, with strong square towers, but that from this point to its western extremity, it is nothing more than a vast mound of earth, with towers sometimes of earth, and sometimes of stone. He considers it, however, as a most stupendous work.† The philosophical Dr. Johnson was so struck in reflecting on this extraordinary effort of human labour, as to declare his opinion, that it would be an honour to any person to be able to say, that even his grandfather had seen the wall of China.‡

* Barrow, p. 334.

† Pere Crebillon's Travels, apud Du Halde, vol. 4. p. 190.

‡ For the dimensions of the great wall of China, where it was passed by the British embassy, see Staunton, vol. 2. p. 372, &c.

CHAP. II.

Principal Cities and Towns—Edifices—Islands.

PEKIN, the capital of China, is situated in a spacious, dry, and sandy plain, in 39°, 54′, 13″ north latitude, and in 116°, 27′, 30″ east longitude. Its form is that of a parallelogram; its circuit is about fourteen English miles, and it has extensive suburbs at every gate. The number of gates are nine, of which three are in the south wall, and two in each of the others. The middle gate, on the south side, opens into the imperial city, which is a space of ground within the general inclosure, laid out also in the form of a parallelogram, about a mile in length from north to south, and about three-quarters of a mile in breadth from east to west. A wall built of large red polished bricks, and covered with a roof of tiles, painted yellow and varnished, surrounds this space, in which are contained not only the imperial palace and gardens, but also the tribunals, or public offices of government, lodgings for the ministers, the eunuchs, and the artificers and tradesmen belonging to the emperor. A great variety of surface, as well as of different objects, appears within this inclosure. A rivulet, winding through it, not only affords a plentiful supply of water, but adds greatly to the beauties of the grounds, by being formed into fine canals, basons, and lakes, which, with the artificial mounts, rocks, and groves, compose a pictu-

resque

resque and delightful scenery, exhibiting a happy imitation of nature.

Between the other two gates in the south wall, and the corresponding and opposite ones on the north side of the city, run two streets perfectly straight, each being four English miles in length, and about forty yards in breadth. One street also of the same width extends from one of the eastern to the opposite western gate; but another similar and parallel street, running between the other eastern and western gates, is interrupted by the north wall of the imperial city, round which it is carried. The cross lanes branching from these main streets, at right angles, are extremely narrow; but the houses are of the same construction as those of the principal streets. All the streets of the Chinese capital are unpaved, and consequently must, in so crowded a city, be extremely dusty in summer, and dirty in winter. At each of the four points, where the great streets intersect one another, is erected a large central gateway, with a smaller one on each side. All these are covered with narrow roofs, and, like the houses, they are painted, varnished, and gilt in the most splendid manner. Few of the houses of Pekin exceed the height of one story;* and none but the great shops have either windows or openings towards the street; but most of them have a sort of terrace with a railed balcony, or parapet wall, in front, on which are placed pots of flowers, shrubs, &c. The walls of the city are from twenty-five to thirty feet in height, flanked with square towers, and surrounded with a ditch.† These towers, which project about forty

* Sir George Staunton, vol. 2, p. 288; none of them exceed two stories.

† According to Mr. Barrow, but Sir George Staunton describes them as being about forty feet high, vol. 2, p. 287.

forty feet from the line of the wall, are placed at regular intervals of about seventy yards; and each has a guard house on its summit. The wall is about twenty-five feet thick at the base, and the breadth of the top is about twelve feet within the parapets, from which it appears, that the slope is considerable. The middle part of the wall is composed of the earth which has been dug out of the ditch, and the outsides are partly of brick and partly of stone. The walls of all the cities in China are thus constructed. No artillery is mounted on the walls or bastions of Pekin; but in a high building, which, rising in several stories, surmounts the gate, are port holes closed with red doors, on the outside of which are painted the representation of cannon.

The first appearance of this celebrated capital of China is not very striking. In approaching an European city, a variety of objects catch the eye and amuse the mind. The towers and spires of churches, domes, obelisks, and other conspicuous structures, tower above the rest, and burst on the sight with an air of magnificence. The distant view of a Turkish city, in like manner, presenting its lofty domes and minarets, excites ideas of grandeur, and raises expectations which, on entrance, however, are generally disappointed. But this is far from being the case with the Chinese metropolis In Pekin, not even a chimney is seen rising above the roofs of the houses; and none of the buildings within the city over-top the walls. Nothing, therefore, presents itself to the view but the walls, the lofty gates, and the numerous massy towers. On entering the city, however, the scene is changed, and this celebrated capital exhibits a very singular and novel appearance. The eye is presented with the

view

view of a wide street, consisting entirely of shops and warehouses, of which the different goods are brought out and displayed in the front of the houses.* Before these are generally erected large wooden pillars, much higher than the eves of the houses, bearing inscriptions in gilt characters, setting forth the nature of the wares and the honest reputation of the seller. These pillars being also generally hung with various coloured flags, streamers, and ribbands, from top to bottom, give to each side of the street the appearance of a line of shipping dressed in the colours of different nations. The sides of the houses, themselves, are not less brilliant, being painted with various colours, but generally sky-blue or green mixed with gold. The articles for sale that make the greatest shew, are coffins for the dead. Throughout the whole empire, coffin-making is a trade of the greatest importance. The most splendid of the coffin furniture seen in England, would make a contemptible figure if placed beside that which is intended for a wealthy Chinese. Next to these, the brilliant appearance of the funeral biers, and the marriage cars, both of which are covered with ornamental canopies, excite the admiration of the European spectator. From these particulars it is easy to conceive, that Pekin, both within and without, is a city of a singular appearance. All the other cities of China are constructed on the same model, and totally different from any thing of the kind seen in Europe.

The best part of this capital is that called the Tartar city, so denominated from its being built, or, perhaps, re-edified by the Monguls in the thirteenth century; or, as others say, from the houses being allotted to the

* Sir George Staunton, p. 291.

Manshurs,

Manshurs at the establishment of the present dynasty.* The immense population of Pekin, which is estimated at no less than 3,000,000, must excite astonishment, as it almost exceeds credibility. This computation, however, is adopted by the English embassy, and authorised by all the information that could be obtained relative to the subject. As this number, however, astonishes the mind and staggers belief, it may not be amiss to exhibit Mr. Barrow's statement and grounds of calculation. "The population of an English city," says this gentleman, "is not to be compared with, or considered as similar to the populousness of a Chinese city, as will be obvious by considering the two capitals of these two empires. Pekin, according to a measurement supposed to be taken with great accuracy, occupies a space of about fourteen square miles. London, with its suburbs, when reduced to a square, is said to comprehend about nine square miles. The houses of Pekin rarely exceed a single story, those of London are seldom less than four; yet both the Chinese and the missionaries who are settled in this capital, agree that Pekin contains 3,000,000 of people; while London is well known not to have 1,000,000. The reason of this difference is, that most of the cross streets of a Chinese city are very narrow, and the alleys branching from them so confined, that a person may place one hand on one side and the other on the other side, as he walks along;† that the houses in general are very small, and that each house contains six, eight, or ten persons, sometimes twice the number.

* The former opinion is adopted by Sir George Staunton, vol. 2, p. 322; the latter by Du Halde, vol. 1, p. 135.

† That is, he may walk in the middle of the street and reach, with his hands, the houses on both sides.

If,

If, therefore, fourteen square miles of buildings in China contain 3,000,000 of inhabitants, and nine square miles of buildings in England 1,000,000, the population of a city in China will be to that of a city in England as twenty-seven to fourteen, or very nearly as two to one; and the former, with a proportion of inhabitants double to that of the latter, will have only the same proportion of buildings." But it must be observed, that Mr. Barrow is here labouring to prove the possibility of the immense population assigned to the Chinese empire, a subject which, according to his own confession, has been much agitated, and generally disbelieved. Here are no positive data for a computation of the number of inhabitants in the capital, no proofs, but merely assertions of its immense population; or, at the most, conjectures which have some appearance of probability, but which might be combated by very reasonable objections. Although Pekin is situated in a sterile and unproductive part of the country, where the poor and sandy soil produces little more than what suffices for the subsistence of the cultivators; and all the necessaries of life must be brought from a great distance, and consequently sold extravagantly dear, yet there would be no reason to wonder that supplies should be procured from distant parts of the country, if the trade and opulence of this immense city were equal to the demands of its numerous inhabitants. But this does not seem to be the case. All kinds of provisions are much dearer in Pekin than in the other parts of China: except the single article of rice, they are nearly as dear as in London; and coals are sold at an extravagant rate. The price of labour, however, bears no proportion to the price of provisions. A mechanic in Pekin thinks himself

 well,

well paid with a shilling per day. The wages of servants are equally low; and many are glad to give their services for a bare subsistence, without any consideration in money. It is therefore not a little astonishing, that so immense a number of people should crowd together in a city which seems so defective in resources for industry, and in means of subsistence.* Notwithstanding the dreams of Vossius, Lipsius, and others, no historical documents authorise a supposition that ancient Rome ever contained more than 1,500,000 of inhabitants. London, with all its fluctuating mass of seamen and strangers, falls considerably short of 1,000,000. In Rome, however, the wealth of the plundered world was once concentrated; and London is now the focus of trade and opulence. The former of these cities must once have surpassed, and the latter must now surpass Pekin in the abundance and variety of employments, and means of subsistence for a numerous population. As poverty and wealth, and modes of living are comparative, it must be confessed that this reasoning will lose some part of its force, when the opulence and luxury of ancient Italy and modern England is contrasted with the poverty and poor living of the people throughout China, and especially in the country adjacent to the capital. But when every allowance is made, and every circumstance is taken into consideration, the immense population of Pekin, and the means by which the 3,000,000 of inhabitants said to be contained in that capital, procure a subsistence, must remain a mystery somewhat difficult to comprehend.† When we consider how

* M Rennel unequivocally expresses his opinion, that the population of Pekin is greatly below that of London. Geog. of Herodotus, p. 348.

† Subjects of this nature are skilfully investigated in Major Rennel's

greatly

greatly the population of Constantinople, Cairo, and several other capitals, has been exaggerated, it would not be unreasonable to suppose some exaggeration in the accounts which the Chinese and the missionaries give of this immense city. Mr. Barrow acknowledges, that the accounts which are given of the population of China, have been generally disbelieved; but it is more easy to believe that 333,000,000 millions of people exist in the whole empire, than that 3,000,000 should be crowded together in the capital.

After what has already been said of the adjacent country, it is obvious that the environs of Pekin, which are entirely flat, cannot be very agreeable. Every thing appears dull, uniform, and unpicturesque; and the poverty of the people corresponds with the melancholy aspect of the country. The gentlemen of the embassy were struck with the poverty of the people in the vicinity of Pekin. "Except in the neighbourhood of the Po-yang lake, the peasantry of the province, in which the capital stands, were more miserable, their houses more mean and wretched, and their lands in a worse state of cultivation than in any other part of the route." Four mud walls, thatched with reeds, or the straw of millet, compose their habitations. Matting of reeds, or bamboo, a pillow of wood covered with leather, a kind of felt rug made of the hairy wool of their broad-tailed sheep, not spun and woven, but pressed together as in the process of hat-making; and sometimes a mattress stuffed with wool, hair, or straw, constitute their bedding. Two or three jars, and a few basons of earthenware, of the coarsest kind, a large iron pot, a frying-pan, and a

enquiry relative to the population of Babylon. Geog. of Herodotus p. 341, 342.

portable

portable stove, are the chief articles of their furniture. They have no chairs nor tables: both men and women sit on their heels, and in this posture, with a bason in their hands, they take their meals, which consist chiefly of boiled rice, millet, or other grain, with the addition of onions or garlic, and mixed sometimes with a few other vegetables, which, for the sake of a relish, are fried with rancid oil, extracted from different kinds of plants. A morsel of pork to relish their rice, is almost all the meat that they can afford to taste. They have little milk, and neither butter nor bread.* Boiled rice is almost their only subsistence; and the poverty of their food is indicated by their meagre appearance. Their principal, and indeed their best beverage, is bad tea, boiled over and over again as long as any taste remains in the leaves, and taken without either milk or sugar; but in cold weather they add a little ginger.† A blue cotton jacket, and a pair of trowsers, with a straw hat and shoes of the same material, constitute the dress of the majority of the people. The climate of Pekin, and the neighbouring country, is also unfavorable to the peasantry. The summer is excessively hot, and the winter intensely cold. The coal is all brought from the mountains of Tartary, on the backs of dromedaries, and of course is extravagantly dear. The winters are often so extremely severe, that partly from their poor and scanty fare, and partly from want of fuel, clothing, and even of shelter, thousands are said to perish with cold and hunger.

* The bread that is made in Pekin is very bad. and sold very dear. Barrow, p. 549.

† It is somewhat astonishing, that tea, which is a product of the middle, as well as of the southern provinces of China, should sell from ten to thirty shillings a pound in Pekin; and that of the latter price not so good as the six shilling teas in London. Barrow, p 519.

Perhaps

Perhaps the miserable state of the people in the surrounding country contributes to increase the population of the capital.* The Chinese generally say, that if there be poverty without, there is wealth within the walls of Pekin; but from what has already been observed of the disproportion of the price of labour to that of the necessaries of life, it seems that the poorer sort of the citizens cannot be in a much better condition than the neighbouring peasantry.

After this description of the metropolis, it would be superfluous to say much of the other Chinese cities, as they are all nearly on the same model. "In China, every city," says Mr. Barrow, "is nearly the same: a quadrangular space of ground is inclosed with walls of stone, of brick, or of earth, all built on the same plan; the houses within them are of the same construction; and the streets, except the principal ones that lead from gate to gate, invariably narrow."

Nankin.]—Nankin is represented as a more extensive city than Pekin, its walls being seventeen English miles in circuit. This city, the largest in the whole empire, was the residence of the court till the fifteenth century. The name of Nankin literally signifies the southern court, and that of Pekin, the northern court. The principal edifices of Nankin, are the gates and a celebrated tower, 9200 feet high, which is cased with porcelain.

Yang-tchoo, Son-tchou, and Hang-tchoo-fou.]—Some other cities on the banks of the Peiho, the imperial canal, &c. are described by the embassy, particularly those of Yang-tchoo, Son-tchou, and Hang-tchoo-fou. The two former are noted for the trade which

* Barrow, p. 545, &c.

they

they carry on in buying and selling women.* The effects of this commerce are visible, in the superior style of dress, and the appearance of the females, which is very different from what is seen in other parts of China. Here they are educated in the pleasing arts of singing, music, dancing, and every other accomplishment suitable to women of superior rank, in order to render them more agreeable and fascinating. The city of Hang-tchoo-fou, situated at the junction of the imperial canal with the Yang-tse-kiang, about the mid-way between Canton and Pekin, is particularly famed for its silk trade. The extensive shops may, in regard to their stock, vie with the best shops in London. In some of these, not less than ten or twelve persons are seen serving behind the counter. In passing through the whole city, not a woman is visible; but the crowds of the other sex appear nearly as numerous as in the great streets of Pekin. The streets of Hang-tchoo-fou, though mostly narrow, have greatly the advantage over those of the capital, being extremely well paved with broad flag-stones, and kept very clean and neat. In the shops are exposed to the view, silks of different kinds, dyed cottons, nankins, and a great variety of English broad cloths, but chiefly blue and scarlet. Here are numbers of butchers and bakers, as well as of fishmongers, dealers in rice, and other grain, ivory-cutters, dealers in lacquered ware, tea-houses, cook-shops, and coffin-makers, who here, as in the other cities of China, make a very conspicuous figure. From the extent and appearance of Hang-tchoo-fou, Mr. Barrow supposes its population to be little inferior to that of Pekin, the number of

* Barrow, p. 518. It is to be observed, that the women throughout all China are purchased.

people

people in the suburbs with those that constantly reside on the water, being perhaps nearly equal to that of the inhabitants within the walls. The situation of this city is extremely well chosen, both for business and pleasure. At the point of junction of the canal and the river, is a commodious bason, often crowded with shipping. From this bason a number of small canals, passing through arches turned in the walls, intersect the cities in various directions, and finally unite in a lake on the western side. This lake is bordered with mountains of a very considerable elevation, and of the most picturesque forms. The vallies are richly clothed with beautiful trees, and the scenery is rendered still more interesting, by the singular and diversified appearance of the repositories of the dead, shaded with cypress, on the declivities of the inferior hills. The lake, which extends from the walls of the city to the foot of the mountains, and stretches its numerous ramifications into the wooded vallies, is a source of amusement to the inhabitants, who keep numerous pleasure barges.

Canton.]—Of all the cities of China, Canton is that which is best known to Europeans. The streets, like those of other Chinese cities, are narrow, but are well paved with flag-stones, and exceedingly crowded with people, although a woman is seldom to be seen. Canton is supposed to contain 1,500,000 of inhabitants, a great number of families residing in barks on the river. Being the only port from which the foreign trade of China is carried on, its exports and imports are very considerable. From Canton to England, the exports, consisting chiefly of tea, are supposed to amount to 1,500,000; and its imports from this country, in woollen cloths, lead, tin, furs,

above £2.000,000

furs, and other articles, are estimated at more than 1,000,000. A considerable trade is also carried on between Canton and the British possessions in India. Of tea, which constitutes the principal export, about 13,000,000 of pounds are said to be consumed in Great Britain, and about 5,000,000 of pounds in the rest of Europe.* The exports from this emporium of China to all the other European countries, are supposed not to exceed the value of 600,000*l.* sterling, and its imports from them are estimated at no more than 200,000*l.* The whole commerce of this port is monopolized by the Hong merchants, whose number seldom exceeds eight. These being sanctioned by the government, all the imports and exports pass through their hands. Their profits, as well as their capital, must be immensely great to enable them to bear the expence of the numerous and magnificent presents which they are expected to make to the superior officers of government at Canton, who being always sent from Pekin, arrive poor, and in the course of three years return with immense riches.

Edifices.]—The Chinese edifices, although destitute of magnificence, and even of regular proportion, are striking and peculiar, especially the towers and pagodas. These, which are always of the same form, rise sometimes to the height of nine stories, of twenty feet each. The lofty gates of the cities have already been mentioned. All the other buildings, even the temples, are low; and the palaces, even those of the emperor, are composed of an assemblage of small structures resembling pavilions, but every where

* It seems that the British trade to Canton must have greatly increased since 1747, when no more than twenty ships, of which eight were English, visited this port. Anderson's Hist. Comm. vol. 3, p. 262.

painted

painted with the most vivid colours, interlarded with a profusion of gilding. The meanness of the furniture in general, corresponds with that of the architecture. Such is the imperial palace of Yuen-min-Yuen, consisting of thirty distinct places of residence for the emperor, with all the necessary appendages of building to each, for the several officers of state, the eunuchs, the servants, and artificers, each composing a village of no inconsiderable magnitude. "These assemblages of buildings," says Mr. Barrow, "which they dignify with the name of palaces, are of such a nature as to be more remarkable for their number, than for their splendour or magnificence. A great proportion of the buildings consists of mean cottages. The very dwelling of the emperor, and the great hall in which he gives audience, when divested of the gilding and gaudy colours with which they are daubed, are little superior to the barns of a substantial English farmer. Their apartments are as deficient in proportion, as their construction is void of every rule and principle, which we are apt to consider as essential to architecture;" and even the famous gardens and park of Gehol, in Tartary, the emperor's favorite residence, among its numerous pavilions, pagodas, and imperial edifices, exhibits nothing that deserves the name of a palace." The Chinese, however, by the taste which they display in planning and ornamenting their gardens and pleasure grounds, compensate for the defects of their architecture. The grounds of Yuen-min-Yuen, comprise an extent of about ten English miles in diameter, or about 60,000 acres, a great part of which is wastes and wood lands. "The general appearance of those parts," says Mr. Barrow, "where we lodged, as to the natural surface of the country,

broken into hill and dale, and diversified with wood and lawn, may be compared with Richmond park, to which, however, they add the very great advantage of abundance of canals, rivers, and large sheets of water, the banks of which, although artificial, are neither trimmed nor shorn, nor sloped like the glacis of a fortification, but have been thrown up with immense labour, in an irregular and as it were fortuitous manner, so as to represent the free hand of nature. Bold, rocky promontories, are seen jutting into a lake, and vallies retiring, some choaked with wood, and others in a high state of cultivation. In particular spots where pleasure houses, or places of rest or retirement were erected, the views appeared to have been studied. The trees were not only placed according to their magnitudes, but the tints of their foliage seemed also to have been considered in the composition of the picture, which some of the landscapes might be called with great propriety." The pleasure grounds of Gehol, in Tartary, are described by Lord Macartney as a terrestrial paradise. In speaking of the eastern side, in which is a lake so extensive that its extremities seem to lose themselves in distant obscurity, his lordship says, "The shores of the lake have all the varieties of shape that the fancy of a painter can delineate, and are so indented with bays, or broken with projections, that almost every stroke of the oar brought a new and unexpected object to our view. Nor are islands wanting, but they are situated only where they should be, each in its proper place, and having its proper character; one marked by a pagoda or other building; one quite destitute of ornament; some smooth and level; some steep and uneven; and others frowning with wood, or smiling

with

with culture." No less than forty or fifty palaces or pavilions, are all furnished in the richest manner with pictures of the emperor's huntings and progresses, with stupendous vases of jasper and agate, with the finest porcelain and japan, and with a variety of European curiosities, as spheres, orreries, clocks, &c. "It would be an endless task," says Lord Macartney, "were I to attempt a detail of this charming place. One thing I was particularly struck with, I mean the happy choice of situation for ornamental buildings. From attention to this circumstance, they have not the air of being crowded, or disproportioned: they never obtrude upon the eye, but wherever they appear, always shew themselves to advantage, and aid, improve, and enliven the prospect. The western side of this park, forms a striking contrast with the eastern part. It exhibits all the sublimer beauties of nature, in as high a degree as the other possesses the attractions of softness and amenity. It is one of the finest forest scenes in the world, wild, woody, mountainous and rocky, abounding with stags and deer of various species, and most of the other beasts of the chace not dangerous to man. In many places immense woods, chiefly oaks, pines, and chesnuts, grow upon almost perpendicular steeps, and force their sturdy roots through every resistance of surface and soil, where vegetation would seem almost impossible. These woods often clamber over the loftiest pinnacles of the stony hills, or gathering on the skirts of them, descend with a rapid sweep, and bury themselves in the deepest vallies. There, at proper distances, you find palaces, banquetting houses, and monasteries, adapted to the situation and peculiar circumstances of the place, sometimes with a rivulet on one hand, gently

stealing through the glade at other times, with a cataract tumbling from above, raging with foam, and resounding with a thousand echoes from below, or silently engulphed in a gloomy pool or yawning chasm. The roads by which we approached these romantic scenes, are often hewn out of the living rock, and conducted round the hills in a kind of rugged stair case. From the great irregularity of the ground, and the various heights to which we ascended, we had opportunities of catching many magnificent points of view by detached glances; but after wandering for several hours, and yet never wearied with wandering, we at last reached a covered pavilion, open on all sides, and situated on a summit so elevated as perfectly to command the whole country to a vast extent. The radius of the horizon I should suppose to be at least twenty miles from the central spot where we stood; and certainly so rich, so various, so beautiful, so sublime a prospect, my eyes had never beheld. I saw every thing before me as on an illuminated map, palaces, pagodas, towns, villages, farm houses, plains and vallies, watered by innumerable streams, hills waving with woods, and meadows covered with cattle of the most beautiful marks and colours. All seemed to be nearly at my feet, and that a step would convey me within reach of them." Below this elevated summit, a vast inclosure was pointed out, which the prime minister of China informed the embassy, was not more accessible to himself than to strangers, being never entered but by the emperor, his women, or his eunuchs. It includes within its bounds, though on a smaller scale, most of the beauties which distinguish both sides of the park. Although nothing appears that in Europe would be denominated a palace, Lord Macartney

Macartney observes, that the buildings are perfect in their kind, either elegantly simple or highly decorated, according to the effect which each is intended to produce, erected at suitable distances, and judiciously contrasted. His lordship, indeed, gives a far more favorable idea of the specimens of architecture at Gehol than Mr. Barrow does of those of Yuen-min-Yuen. The reader will excuse the length of these remarks from authorities so respectable, on subjects so little known, and so interesting, as they exhibit a distinguishing characteric of the particular taste and genius of the Chinese. Lord Macartney adds this general observation on the analogy between the English and the Chinese gardening, that the excellence of the former consists in improving, and of the latter in conquering nature; and both produce the same effect.*

Among the most remarkable of the Chinese edifices may be reckoned the bridges, which are very numerous. They appear extremely light and elegant; but the plan on which they are constructed does not indicate much strength. It is somewhat singular, that notwithstanding their attention to their canals and their bridges, the Chinese are totally neglectful of their roads. Except those near Pekin, so well described by Sir George Staunton, and in some places where the grand canal is interrupted with mountainous ground, there is scarcely a tolerable road in the whole country.†

Islands.]—Numerous islands are scattered along the southern and eastern coasts of China. Of these,

* Lord Macartney's Journal, apud Barrow, p. 129, &c. Sir George Staunton calls a Chinese gardener "the painter of nature," vol. 2, p. 352.

† Barrow, p. 513.

Hainan and Formosa are the most considerable. The southern part of Hainan is mountainous; the northern level and productive of rice. Formosa is a recent acquisition of the Chinese in the seventeenth century. The isles of Leoo-Keoo, between Formosa and Japan, constitute a civilized kingdom, tributary to China. The small island and town of Macao, at the mouth of the Bocca Tigris, or river of Canton, belongs to the Portugueze, who, in 1586, obtained a grant of it from the emperor, on condition of expelling the robbers by whom it was then inhabited.*

* Gemelli, ap. And. Hist. Com. vol. 2, p. 164.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Historical View—General Progress of Society—Of Arts and Sciences—Literature and Commerce.

THE transactions and events recorded in the history of China, a country sequestered from the rest of the world, can afford little satisfaction to an European reader. This empire has not, either in ancient or modern times, had any political connection with the western parts of this continent. Its affairs have never had any influence on those of Europe, or of any of the countries of which our histories treat. In this respect, China may be considered as a world within itself; and the Chinese nation a portion of mankind detached from the rest of the species. To give in succinct detail, only a very concise sketch of Chinese history, would far exceed the limits of this work. The annals of the nation are immensely voluminous, amounting to 668 volumes; from which Le Pere de Maille composed his history. The materials are said to be drawn from the most authentic source, being compiled by the imperial historiographers. But these recorders of the national annals have no check on their assertions, nor any proof of their veracity from contemporary writers, either of their own or of any other nation. History, like every thing else in China, is enveloped in mystery; and notwithstanding the eulogiums which credulous Europeans have lavished on the veracity of

the Chinese annalists, little credit can be given to the boasts of a nation, which pretends to an antiquity beyond all measure of credibility, or to historians, who carry their records far beyond the period to which scriptural chronology assigns the creation of the world. The early records of Chinese history, are universally acknowledged to be entirely fabulous, and composed in modern times. And if their historians could impose on the world a fabulous history of a period of many thousands of years before the world was created, we can place little confidence in their relations of the events of succeeding ages; and histories acquire no better claim to authenticity for being composed under the inspection of a despotic government. We may, indeed, believe all the stories that are told concerning the precautions taken against passion and partiality, by keeping the history of each reign a profound secret till the death of the monarch, or even till the extinction of the dynasty. But who shall hinder a sovereign of China from inspecting the annals of his empire? or where are there courtiers more obsequious, or subjects more submissive than in China? From these considerations, we may readily perceive how much the Chinese historians are under the control of authority. It appears that the Europeans have been misled in their ideas concerning Chinese history, as in those which they have formed of the ancient learning of the Hindoos and the Egyptians. A very short sketch of the historical events of China, therefore, will suffice in a work of this nature, and the publication of Pere de Maille will satisfy more inquisitive curiosity.

Passing over the fabulous ages preceding Confucius, who was born about 551 years before the Christian

æra,

æra, it appears, that in the time of that philosopher, China was divided into a number of sovereignties, acknowledging the paramount authority of one supreme monarch, like Russia, after the death of Vladimir, or like Germany in later times* These different states, however, appear to have composed one great nation, united in religion, government, language, and general ideas. Before that early period, however, it appears that the Chinese had made a considerable progress in civilization and morals. It is generally supposed that China was peopled by the descendants of Noah soon after the flood. Of this, indeed, scarcely a doubt can exist; and it seems that the Chinese had retained the principles of natural religion, and the knowledge possessed by the first men, longer than any other pagan nation. But in process of time, like the rest of mankind, they began to lose these primitive ideas, and Confucius laboured to restore their ancient religion and philosophy. The sovereigns of China gradually acquired a greater degree of power; but it does not appear that their authority was absolute until the conquest of their country by Kublai Khan. If, indeed, we consider that the Chinese histories are filled with accounts of violent revolutions brought about by powerful viceroys, and that upward of twenty different dynasties are enumerated in their annals, it is no improbable conjecture, that the complete despotism which levels all the subjects at the foot of the throne, and admits of no distinction of rank in the state, except that of sovereign and slave, was not fully established until a period comparatively modern. The Tartars, on the north and west, were the only foreign enemies which the Chinese had to fear

* Du Halde, vol. 3, p. 295.

and to prevent their incursions, the celebrated wall was constructed above two centuries before the Christian æra, according to their own historians. From the silence of Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller of the thirteenth century, however, several have supposed that this celebrated fortification did not at that time exist, and consequently that it ought to be assigned to a more modern period. But Sir George Staunton says, that a manuscript copy in the Doge's library at Venice, afforded sufficient proof that Marco Polo did not cross the great wall, but travelled by the way of Samarchand, Cashgar, and Bengal, and entered China, by the southern province of Shensee.* This circumstance, indeed, accounts for his not seeing that celebrated rampart; but it is somewhat extraordinary that so inquisitive a traveller should receive no information concerning so wonderful a work. But at whatever period it was constructed, it appears that China must then have been united under one compact political system, as nothing less than the fiat of a vigorous government could have excited such efforts of human labour.

The first revolution in China that is recorded in contemporary histories, is the conquest of that country by Kublai Khan, about the end of the thirteenth century, after a war of nineteen years. The successors of this prince, however, were expelled, and the native dynasty of Ming reascended the throne of China. The Chinese empire was again governed by native sovereigns until the middle of the seventeenth century, when a daring rebel, named Li-cong-see, dethroned the emperor, Tsong-tchin, who, to avoid falling into the hands of his revolted subject, destroyed himself

* Staunton, vol. 2, ch. 5,

and

and his family, and most of his courtiers and favorites followed his example. But the imperial general, Ou-sang-quey, refusing to recognize the usurper, called in Chun-Tchi, khan of the Mandshurs, a Tartar tribe. This prince expelled Li-cong-see, and resolving not to lose the fruit of his victories, placed himself on the throne of China. In order to conceal the desparity of numbers between the conquerors and the conquered, he obliged his Tartars to adopt the dress and conform to the manners of the Chinese; and all his measures for securing his conquest, were formed on principles of the most profound policy. His successors have also been able princes; and ever since that revolution, which happened in 1664, the Chinese have quietly submitted to the Tartarian sceptre. Kien Long, the fourth of the Tartar dynasty, was on the throne at the time of Lord Macartney's embassy. That monarch, who appears to have had an excellent understanding joined to a steady application, greatly extended his dominions by the conquest of the country of the Eluts and Little Bucharia; and by assuming the character of protector of the Lama, he annexed Thibet to the Chinese empire. His reign is also distinguished by a remarkable emigration of a numerous horde of Tartars, who had, from time immemorial, been settled on the banks of the Yaik and the Volga, where they acknowledged the sovereignty of Russia. This tribe, consisting of about 50,000 families, taking a sudden disgust against the Russian government, migrated to the frontiers of China, and submitted to the dominion of that empire. Kien Long died in 1799, and was succeeded by Ku Shing, the present emperor, and the fifth of the Tartar, or Mandshur dynasty.

CHAP. IV.

Present State, political and moral — Religion — Government — Laws— Army—Navy — Revenues—Commerce—Manufactures—Population— Political importance—Language—Literature—Polite Arts—Education —Manners and Customs—National Character.

Religion.]—THE Chinese empire cannot properly be said to have any national religion, unless it be that of the Lama. This appears to be the religion of the court, and its priests are paid and maintained as a part of the imperial establishment. The government gives no support to any other system, and never interferes in religious opinions.* The religion of Confucius appears to be a species of materialism. His followers, whose opinions are authorised by his writings, are said, like the Stoics, to consider the whole universe as one animated system, made up of one material substance, and one spirit, of which every living thing is an emanation, and to which, when separated by death from the material part which it had animated, it again returns. It is, however, somewhat difficult to reconcile those ideas with the belief of an individual existence in a future state. This doctrine, like that of Aristotle and several of the other Greek philosophers, seems to imply rather an absorption of all intellectual beings into the universal soul of the world, than a continuation of individual and conscious existence. Yet this personal and conscious existence seems to be implied by the offerings which the Chinese philosopher instructed the people to make at the tombs of their

* Sir George Staunton, vol. 2, ch. 4, p. 271, &c.

ancestors,

ancestors, and by the mode in which his soul is, to this day, addressed by his followers. In every city is a public building, a kind of college, in which the examinations for degrees of office are held. This building is called the house of Confucius; and here, on certain appointed days, the men of letters assemble to pay respect to the memory of their esteemed philosopher. In the great hall appropriated for this ceremony, a plain tablet is erected, on which is an inscription in gilt characters, to this effect: "O Cong-foo-tse,* our revered master let thy spiritual part descend and be pleased with this our respect, which we now humbly offer to thee!" The religion of Confucius appears, indeed, not to have been well understood by many who have written on the subject. That philosopher taught, that although the body resolves itself into its primitive elements, and becomes a part of the universe, yet the spirits of such as perform their duty in life are permitted to re-visit their ancient habitations, or such places as might be appointed for receiving the homage of their descendants, on whom they have the power of conferring benedictions. He taught the indispensible duty of performing sacred rites to the honour of their ancestors. He also maintained, that such as neglected this pious duty would be punished after death, by being deprived of the privilege of visiting the hall of ancestors, and consequently of the pleasure arising from the homage paid by their descendants. It is therefore evident, from this kind of worship paid to their ancestors, that the immortality of the soul is a fundamental article of belief among the Chinese.

The followers of Confucius, notwithstanding their enthusiastic admiration of his doctrines, have never

* The Chinese pronunciation of Confucius.

paid him divine honours, nor even erected any statue to his memory. And neither that philosopher, nor his disciples, ever thought of representing the great first cause under any image or personification. They considered the sun, the moon, the stars, and the elements, with the azure firmament, as the creative and productive powers, the immediate agents of the Deity, and inseparably connected with him. They therefore offered adoration to these agents, united in one word Tien, which signifies heaven, or perhaps more properly, universal nature.*

But the religious doctrines of Confucius were too metaphysical to preserve their purity among a people so unprepared for their reception. An object of adoration, purely mental, was not sufficient for a people of gross and untutored understandings. They required some visible object, on which they might fix their attention. The system of Confucius, by inculcating the worship of their deceased ancestors, had a natural tendency to induce the belief in tutelar genii presiding over particular places and families; it only remained to give them a form and substance, and this being done, China was, in process of time, inundated with idols. Shortly after the death of Confucius, a man of the name of Loo-Kung, having travelled into Thibet, and acquired some knowledge of the religion of the Lamas, undertook to render himself famous, by establishing a new sect, under the appellation of Tao-tse, or "Sons of Immortals." He taught, that to live at ease, and make himself happy, are the chief concerns of man: that to seize the present moment, regardless of the past and the future, is the business

* Du Halde seems to divide the Chinese literati into two sects, the Deists and the Materialists, or Atheisst, vol, 3. p, 59 and 60.

of

of life. Immortality being one of the attributes of the Dalal Lama, who is supposed never to die, the soul of the reigning Lama passing immediately into the person of his successor; this doctrine was improved by Lao-Kung, into the belief of a possibility of producing a renovation of the faculties in the same body, by a beverage that should render the corporeal, as well as the spiritual part of man, immortal. Numbers of all ranks flew with avidity to this formation of life, which, by shortening their mortal span, in reality helped them forward to immortality. At the time of the Tartar conquest, there were few of the principal Chinese who were free from this insanity. Even at this day the experience of centuries has not convinced them of the fallacy of these pretensions, and the liquor of life is still the philosophers' stone after which they are constantly in search. The priests of Tao-tse, consistently with their principle of taking no thought for the future, devote themselves to a life of celibacy, in order to avoid the cares attendant on a family connection, and generally associate in monasteries.

About A. D. 65, the priests of Fo being introduced from India, imported into China a great portion of the Hindoo mythology, and particularly the doctrine of the metempsychosis.* The idol Fo, is supposed to be the same as the Boodha of Hindostan. The religion of the Lamas of Thibet is supposed to be a branch of this system, which is widely extended over eastern Asia; and since the accession of the Tartar princes to the throne of China, it has become the religion of the court, which before adhered to that of

* Du Halde places this event a few years sooner; vol. 3. p, 15; the particular date is of little importance.

 Confucius.

Confucius. The priests are numerous; they mostly wear yellow gowns, and like those of Tao-tse, live in a state of celibacy in convents or temples. It would be tedious to describe their various ceremonies, or their numerous, and oftentimes monstrous idols.* Among these, however, may be mentioned that of Briarchus, with his 100 hands, which is of a most colossal stature, being commonly from fifty to sixty, and sometimes even eighty feet in height. But the largest of all their deities, is a goddess, which seems to be a personification of nature. She is modelled in a variety of ways, sometimes with four heads, and forty or fifty arms, the heads looking towards the four cardinal points of the compass, and each arm holding some natural production of the earth, subservient to the use of man. The religion of the Chinese, as well as that of the Hindoos, seems to have an allegorical origin, and many of their deities are supposed to correspond with those of the ancient Egyptians and Greeks.† No information, however, with regard to its ground work, can be obtained from the priests of the present day, who are extremely ignorant. The temples are often converted into lodging-houses for the state officers, and other public characters, when on travel; and this custom is attended with some advantages to the priests, by the donations which are made on such occasions. As they are mostly supported by voluntary contributions, and trifling legacies left by their pious votaries, they are thankful for the smallest

* For an account of the Chinese religion, see Du Halde, vol. 3. p. 14, &c.

† There have been great disputes among the most learned missionaries, whether the whole system of the Chinese religion be any thing more th' Materialism. Du Halde, vol. 3. p. 59.

gifts. It has already been observed, that the emperor pays his own priests, who are also those of his Tartar subjects. The Chinese Confucionists, or men of learning, maintain theirs, whether of Fo or Tao-tse; and the mass of the people, from the prevailing propensity of enquiring into fututity, afford the means of support to thousands, or perhaps millions of priests, by the offerings carried to the altars whenever they judge it necessary to consult the book of fate, which is done on most of the common occurrences of life. These enquiries into futurity constitute, indeed, the practical part of religion in China. There is no communion of worship, no public prayers, but the temples are always open to the people. The articles of faith, and the modes of worship, are as various as the fancies of the worshippers. But the Chinese seem to have little veneration for their idols. When a town or village is afflicted with any unusual disaster, such as famines, epidemic diseases, inundations, &c. which do not cease after repeated supplications, the people not unfrequently punish their gods, by pulling down the temples about their ears, and leaving them exposed without any shelter to the inclemency of the weather.*

Notwithstanding the persecutions which have so frequently been exercised against the Christians, there are many Catholic missionaries, both French, Italians, and Portuguese, in China, especially at Pekin, where several of them are employed by the emperor as astronomers, mathematicians, &c. Some of them,

* Barrow, p. 472. Our author, however, does not seem to assert this as a positive fact, but says, that it is no uncommon thing to see temples in ruins, in the midst of which their monstrous gods and goddesses are seen entire, and exposed to the elements, of which he considers this as the cause, p. 471.

besides the emoluments arising from their offices, have shops and houses in the capital, which they rent to the Chinese. They have also villas and estates, where they cultivate the vine, and other fruits, and make their own wine.* The revenues of the two Portuguese seminaries are stated to amount to nearly 4000*l.* sterling per annum.†

In China there is also a colony of Jews, who are said to have settled there soon after Alexander's expedition into India. Their entrance into the country must indeed be of an ancient date, as they are said to be totally ignorant of the establishment of christianity, and of any other Jesus having made his appearance in the world, than the son of Sirac. They are said to possess a copy of the Pentateuch, and some other fragments of the sacred writings, and to be rigorously attached to the Mosaic law. These Jews are said to be settled chiefly in the silk provinces, and to reside in considerable numbers about the city Hong-tchoo-fou, where they carry on the principal article in this trade.‡

Government.]—The government of China is patriarchal and despotic. The power of the sovereign is absolute; but it is regarded as the authority of a parent over his children. This authority is held sacred in China. It is not limited either in power or extent, but is maintained with undiminished and uncontrollable sway, till the death of one of the parties dissolves the obligation. The emperor takes the title of the great father, and being placed above all earthly control, is supposed to be above earthly descent. He

* Barrow, p. 444. † Ibid. p. 445.

‡ The gentlemen of the English embassy were extremely mortified, that in passing through Hong-tchoo-fou, circumstances did not permit them to investigate this curious fact. Barrow, p. 439.

therefor

therefore styles himself the son of heaven, and ruler of the world, and is honoured by his subjects with solemn prostrations, and a homage scarcely inferior to that which is paid to the divinity. Conformably to this system, the governor of a province or city is also considered as its father: the grand misfortune is, that a government so plausible in theory, is often miserably deficient in practice; and that this supposed parental authority of the governors, and filial obedience of the governed, frequently degenerates into tyranny and oppression on the one part, and distrust, disobedience, and rebellion, on the other. The constitution, however, has established a singular kind of check on the imperial authority, in the establishment of a censorate, consisting of two officers, who have the right of remonstrating against any illegal act about to be sanctioned by the emperor. They have also the power of determining his share of posthumous fame, in being the historians of his reign, or rather the biographers of his life. The records which they write are deposited in a chest, which is supposed not to be opened till the death of the sovereign, and sometimes not till after the lapse of two or three generations, or even till the expiration of the dynasty. In the last case, falsification may be reasonably expected; and in all cases it may be supposed that the censors act with great caution, and probably in concert with the emperor, as in China all is art and disguise. To assist the monarch in the arduous task of governing an empire of so vast an extent, and so numerous a population, there are two councils, one ordinary, the other extraordinary; the former is composed of the principal ministers, who are six in number, the latter consists entirely of the princes of the blood. For the admini-

stration of public affairs, there are six boards or departments. These resolve upon, recommend, and report to the emperor all matters belonging to their respective jurisdictions. Subordinate to these supreme courts, held in the capital, are others of a similar institution, in all the provinces and great cities of the empire, each of which corresponds with its principal in Pekin. The late emperor, Kien Long, never omitted to give regular audience in the great hall of the palace, at the hours of four or five o'clock in the morning. Ever since the days of the Assyrians and the Medes, one of the first grand maxims of policy in the despotic governments of Asia has been, to conceal the governing power, as much as possible, from vulgar inspection. A power that acts in secret, and of which the influence is felt in the remotest corners of the empire, is supposed to make a stronger impression on the mind, and to inspire greater awe and respect, than if the principal agent were visible and familiar to the public eye. Conformably to this maxim, the sovereign of China shews himself in public only on particular occasions, and in the height of splendour and magnificence, at the head of his whole court, consisting of an assemblage of many thousands of officers of state, all ready at the word of command to prostrate themselves at his feet. Lord Macartney, in describing the anniversary of the emperor's birth-day, says, notice being given that the festival was about to begin, all the great men and mandarins, in their robes of state, were drawn up before the imperial pavilion, where the monarch remained concealed behind a screen. All eyes were turned towards the place where his imperial majesty was supposed to be enthroned. Slow solemn music, muffled drums, and deep toned bells, were

were heard at a distance;—on a sudden the sounds ceased, and all was still. "At length the great band, both vocal and instrumental, struck up with all their powers of harmony, and instantly the whole court fell flat upon their faces before this invisible Nebuchadnezzar. The music might be considered as a kind of birth day ode, or state anthem, the burden of which was, "Bow down your heads all ye dwellers upon earth, bow down your heads before the great Kien-long, the great Kien-long." And then all the dwellers upon China earth there present, except ourselves, prostrated themselves upon the ground at every renewal of the chorus. Indeed, in no religion, ancient or modern, has the Divinity been addressed with stronger exterior marks of worship and adoration, than were this morning paid to the phantom of Chinese majesty." During the whole day, however, the idol remained invisible. The day following his majesty condescended to shew himself at the theatre, and to give audience to the ambassadors.*

Laws.]—A regular discussion of the Chinese code is not in this place to be expected. It is enough to observe, that the laws of this empire, define in the most distinct and perspicuous manner, almost every shade of criminal offences, and the punishment awarded to each; that the greatest care appears to have been taken in constructing this scale of crimes and punishments, and that if the practice were equal to the theory, few nations could boast of a more mild, equitable, and at the same time more efficacious

* The etiquette in approaching his Chinese majesty, requires nine solemn prostrations, with the ceremony of striking the forehead against the ground each time. With this ceremony, however, Lord Macartney did not think fit to comply. Sir George Staunton, vol. 2, p. 303, &c.

 administration

administration of justice. We must, however, condemn the law which enacts, that in case of accident, or sudden death, the person seen last in company with the deceased, is required to exculpate himself by evidence. A person found mortally wounded, is consequently left to perish, no one daring to assist him, or to afford him medical relief. Whoever performs any chirurgical operation on such a person, is found guilty of murder if the patient happens to die; and in China murder is never overlooked, except in the horrid exposure of infants. For the use of the subject, the Chinese laws are published in sixteen volumes, in the plainest manner which the language admits.

Army.]—It is impossible to exhibit any exact statement of the military force of the Chinese empire.* The Tartar cavalry is for the most part stationed on the frontiers, and the Tartar infantry are distributed as guards in the different cities of the empire. The rest of the army is a sort of militia, which is never embodied, but is parcelled out in the small towns and villages, where the soldiers act as jailors, constables, assistants to magistrates, subordinate collectors of taxes, &c. Every soldier thus stationed, has his portion of land assigned him, and those that are married are never removed. The military uniform varies almost in every province. In some parts the soldiers wear blue jackets edged with red, or brown with yellow; some have long pantaloons, some breeches and stockings of cotton, others petticoats and boots. The bowmen wear long loose gowns of blue cotton, studded all over with brass knobs, and bound round

* It was stated to the English at 1,000,000 foot, and 800,000 horse. Barrow p. 405.

the

the middle with a girdle, from which hangs the sabre, always on the right side, and not on the left as in Europe. On the head they wear a helmet of leather, or gilt pasteboard, with flaps on each side, and a tuft of long hair at the top, dyed of a scarlet colour. The Chinese troops, in fact, do not make a very martial appearance. Their quilted petticoats, satin boots, and fans, exhibit a mixture of clumsiness and effeminacy that accords but ill with the military character. Their weapons are the bow, the sabre, and the matchlock. They have very little artillery, and that little is as wretched as can possibly be imagined. Although the Tartars continued the army on its old footing, they use every possible endeavour to recruit it with their own countrymen, and every Tartar child is enrolled.

Revenues.]—The revenues of China are estimated at 66,000,000 sterling.* But as a great part of the land tax, or emperor's tenth of the estimated products is paid in kind, it is impossible to ascertain the precise amount in money. The expences of the civil and military establishments, &c., are defrayed out of the magazines of the provinces where they are incurred, and the surplus is remitted to Pekin to meet the expenditure of the court. This surplus revenue amounted in 1792 to about 12,000,000 sterling.

Commerce.]—The foreign trade of China being almost wholly carried on at Kiakta on the Russian frontier, and at the port of Canton, has been already described, and indeed is of little importance, considering the vast extent and population of the empire. Scarcely any civilized nation pays so little regard to foreign commerce as the Chinese. When the Euro-

* Barrow, p. 402. Sir Geo. Staunton, vol. 3, p. 390.

peans

peans complain of the extortions practised at Canton, the answer which they receive from every petty officer of government is this, "Why do you come here? We take your articles which we have no need of, and we give you in return our precious tea, which nature has denied to your country, and yet you are not satisfied. Why do you so often visit a country, the customs of which you dislike? We do not invite you to come among us; but when you do come and behave well, we treat you accordingly. Respect then our hospitality, but do not pretend to regulate or reform it." In China, the merchant is considered as far below the husbandman; and whoever is engaged in foreign trade, is regarded as little better than a vagabond. The home trade only is supposed to be necessary and deserving of the protection of government. This trade being carried on entirely by barter, and the emperor's share of the products of the lands being chiefly paid in kind; the inland navigation employs such numbers of craft of different descriptions, as baffle all attempts at a calculation. "I firmly believe," says Mr. Barrow, "that all the floating vessels in the world besides, taken collectively, would not be equal either in number or tonnage to those of China."* This immense trade of barter, however, shews the scarcity of specie; and the same author observes, that a shilling in China will, generally speaking, go as far as three in Great Britain.†

Manufactures.]—The manufactures of China are so multifarious, as to embrace almost every production

* Barrow, p. 399.

† Ibid. p. 402. This, however, does not appear to be the case at Pekin. See what has been said on that subject, and chiefly from the same author.

of industry. The most celebrated is that of porcelain; next in importance are those of silk, cotton, &c. The manufacture of porcelain, so far as depends on the preparation of the materials, is by the Chinese carried to a degree of perfection unequalled by any other nation, except the Japanese. Notwithstanding, however, the skill of the Chinese and the Japanese, in preparing their materials, neither of these nations can boast of giving them much elegance of form. Nothing can be more rude or ill-designed, than the grotesque figures and other objects painted, or rather daubed on their porcelain; but their colours are inimitable.

Population.]—The population of this empire, as commonly represented, is so vast as almost to surpass the limits of credibility; and, as Mr. Barrow confesses, what has been said on this subject has been generally disbelieved. According to the information given to the British ambassador by a mandarin of high rank, the present population of China amounts to 333,000,000, and its area to 1,297,999 square miles.* How far this statement may be entitled to implicit credit, may be doubted by those who have noticed the inaccuracy of such calculations in the enlightened countries of Europe, and the proneness of the Chinese, and, indeed, of most other people, to exaggeration in their estimates of national importance. Mr. Barrow, however, without pretending to verify the statement, adduces good reasons to shew, that this population is undoubtedly possible. Admitting it to be a fact, that China contains the enormous number of 333,000,000 of people, it is no more than double the population of Great Britain per square mile. To repeat all the arguments of this author, and

* Sir Geo. Staunton, appendix.

examine all his deductions and inferences, would lead to a prolixity incompatible with the present plan. It will not, however, be amiss to observe, that he makes the following probable supposition. "If," says he, "the country, i. e. Great Britain, were pretty equally partitioned; if the land was applied solely to produce food for man; if no horses, nor superfluous animals were kept for pleasure, and few only for labour; if the country was not drained of its best hands for foreign trade and large manufactories; if the carriage of goods was performed by canals, rivers, and lakes, all abounding with fish; if the catching of these fish gave employment to a very considerable portion of the inhabitants; if the bulk of the people were satisfied to abstain almost wholly from animal food, except such as is most easily procured, that of pigs, ducks, and fish; if only a very small part of the grain raised was employed in the distilleries, but was used as the staff of life for man; and if this grain was of such a nature as to yield twice, and even three times the produce that wheat will give on the same space of ground; if moreover, the climate were so favorable as to allow two such crops every year.* Under these circumstances, Great Britain might support the double of its present population; and it must be considered, that China unites all these advantages. An acre of rice will afford a supply of that grain for ten persons, and an acre of cotton will furnish 200 or 300 with clothing. On these grounds then, we may admit the possibility of this immense population, of which the aggregate number staggers belief. But although in some parts the multitudes of

* This is the case with rice in the southern provinces of China. Barrow, p. 577.

people

people appear astonishing, the extensive and almost unpeopled wastes, even in the neighbourhood of the grand canal, which might be supposed to be the most populous part of the country, seem to authorize an abatement in the calculation. The veracity and sound judgment of the gentlemen of the embassy, claim the greatest degree of deference to their authority. It is a misfortune that their residence in the country was too short, and their opportunities too limited, for a complete investigation of so curious and interesting a subject.*

Political relations.]—China concentrates within itself all its political importance and relations. This empire is, by its situation, removed from all apprehension of foreign attack, and it makes no foreign alliances. The Monguls and Tartars were the only enemies whom it had to fear in ancient times, and by whom it was frequently invaded, and wholly or partially conquered. But the power of the Monguls is extinct; the Manshurs now reign over China, and no formidable enemy exists near its borders. An European squadron might attack the coasts and seize Canton, or any other port; but nothing could be gained by such a conquest, which would annihilate all commerce between the conquerors and the Chinese. Russia is the only great power with which China can ever come into hostile contact. Indeed, it is only the vast distance, and the almost impassable barrier of sandy deserts, which would present almost insurmountable obstacles to the march of an army, which ensures this

* We cannot, however, adopt the estimates of M. Paun, who was actuated by the spirit of party against the Jesuists, and who asserts that the population of China cannot amount to so many as 82,000,000. Recherches sur les Egyptiens & les Chinois, tom. 1, p. 76.

empire

empire against any invasion from Russia. The numerous but undisciplined troops of China, could make no stand against an European army. Internal revolutions are what this empire has now chiefly to fear. As Lord Macartney observes, an erroneous idea is formed of this immense political structure, by considering it as composed of one united people. The Tartars and the Chinese, notwithstanding their affected resemblance in dress, and other externals, are two distinct nations, of sentiments mutually hostile.* At the time of the embassy, the Chinese were extremely disaffected to the Tartar government, and several symptoms of a revolution began to appear. It is not improbable, that in such circumstances the Chinese might unite with a foreign invader in expelling the Tartars, and a very small European army might conquer the country; but to preserve the conquest, perhaps not less than 100,000 men would be required: From a collective view of these circumstances, it appears that China must, for a length of time beyond all calculation, remain an independent empire, without any political connection with the western world.

Language.]—The Chinese language is the most singular of any in the world. It is marked with every character of originality, and affords, independently of all other authorities, an incontestible proof of the great antiquity of the nation. Not even the most distant degree of affinity can be discovered, either with regard to the form of the character, the system on which it is constructed, or the idiom between the Chinese language and that of any other nation on the face of the globe. The written language of China, consists not of letters, but of characters, each of which

* Sir Geo. Staunton, vol. 2, p. 231.

has

has the same signification as a word in other languages. The characters, which may be considered as the primitive roots, or keys, do not exceed 212 in number. One of these, or its abbreviation, composes a part of every character used in the language, some of which are so complicated, as to consist of no fewer than sixty or seventy distinct lines. These variously combined, as the expression of ideas may require, amount to near 80,000 different characters.* Some writers of great ingenuity, suppose the Chinese language to have been originally hierogliphical; but Mr. Barrow exhibits a specimen of some of the most simple radical signs, with their respective significations, in which not the least resemblance between the picture and the object can be traced; and on this ground denies that the Chinese characters were ever designed as hierogliphics.† The characters are uniform throughout the whole empire; but the Oral language is different in different provinces. In this respect the difference is almost as great between Pekin and Canton, as between London and Paris.

Education.]—Education is considered in China as an object of great importance. A complete knowledge of the language is the principal recommendation to preferment. As there are no hereditary nobility, no family interest or influence, no distinction of ranks, except such as arises from office and employment, the road to promotion is equally open to all; and learning alone determines the point in regard to individual preference. The examinations to be passed for the attainment of offices and dignities, are chiefly confined to the knowledge of the language; and in this respect they are extremely rigid. The candidates for

* Barrow, p. 251. † Ibid. p. 248.

any

any public employment being strictly searched, in order to ascertain whether they have any writing about them, are put into separate apartments. Paper, ink, &c. are given them, and they are required to compose, within a given time, a theme on the subject proposed by the examining officers. Literature being thus the only road to preferment, it is no wonder that great attention should be paid to the business of education, which, however, is rendered extremely tedious by the difficulties attending the language. The Chinese youth begin to study the language at about six years of age. Their first employment is to learn the names of a number of characters, with the appropriate sound. The next step is learning to write the characters. These attainments occupy the attention of a youth of moderate capacity till the age of fifteen or sixteen. At that period he has learned to read and write, without knowing any thing of the meaning of the characters. The last step in the Chinese education, is to learn their signification from a dictionary, so that the student now first begins to affix to the characters the appropriate ideas, and to comprehend the use of the written language. Extracts from the works of their celebrated philosopher, Cong-foo-tze, or Confucius, are then put into his hands. Various treatises on the art of government and on the laws, complete him for taking his first degree, which commonly happens about his twentieth year; but he must study at least ten years longer, in order to be qualified for any high employment.*

Literature.]—The nature of the Chinese language, may be considered as a great obstacle in the way of

* Barrow, p. 263. For the Chinese education, see also Du Halde, vol. 3, p. 5, &c.

literary improvement. In learning the use of its characters, a great portion of that time is consumed, which might otherwise be employed in acquiring ideas. From this and other causes, it appears that no advancement has been made in any branch of polite literature or speculative science, during the space of more than 2,000 years. There are not any other works in the empire equal to the writings of Confucius, who flourished about 500 years before the Christian æra.* The moral precepts of this great philosopher display an excellence of mind that might do honour to any age or nation. The late emperor, Kien Long, was considered as one of the best Chinese poets of modern times; but the language is much better adapted to the concise style of ethics, than the sublime flights of poetry.†

Sciences, polite arts, &c.]—It has already been observed, that among the Chinese, science, as well as literature, has long been stationary. An astronomical board has formed one of the state establishments from the earliest period of their history. Yet so little progress has been made in this science, that the only part of its functions that can be called astronomical, has long been committed to the care of foreigners, whom they affect to regard as barbarians. The principal object of this board is, to compose and publish a national calendar, and to point out to the government the suitable times and seasons for weighty undertakings. In this important almanack, as in the ancient

* According to Du Halde, Confucius was born about 551 years before Christ, and was contemporary with Pythagoras, vol. 3, p. 293.

† In comparing Confucius and the other Chinese philosophers with those of the other Pagan nations, Du Halde thinks that the former are entitled to the pre-eminence, vol. 3, p. 27.

Greek and Roman calendars, all the supposed lucky and unlucky days, for every transaction of life, are inserted. To the Chinese members of this board, the astrological part is committed: the Portugueze missionaries have the superintendance of the astronomical part, and the important office of regulating the calendar. "I saw and conversed," says Mr. Barrow, "with numbers of their learned men at the palace of Yuen-min-Yuen, but I can safely say, that not a single Chinese, nor a Tartar, who shewed themselves there, was possessed of the slightest knowledge of astronomy, or could explain any of the various phœnomena of the heavenly bodies." The ridiculous ceremonies which they perform on the occasion of an eclipse, are a proof of their ignorance of its nature and cause.* The brazen gong is violently beat in order to frighten away the dragon, which is supposed to have seized on the luminary; and for this purpose, the great officers of state, in every city, are instructed to give public notice when it will happen, according to the calculations of the national almanack. When the English embassy was at Pekin, all the officers of the court put on mourning, and all business was suspended on the day of a lunar eclipse. Their ideas of geography are equally absurd with those on astronomy. They have no knowledge of geometry; and their arithmetic is mechanical, being performed by means of an ingeniously contrived instrument, called the swan-pan. The Chinese are supposed to have known the use of gunpowder before the Christian æra; and they pretend to have been long acquainted with artillery. The

* Du Halde, however, asserts, that the great perfectly understand the nature of eclipses, and that these ceremonies are performed in compliance with the notions of the people, vol. 3, p. 89.

latter

latter of these facts, however, is doubtful.* They have long had the art of printing, but never proceeded beyond a wooden block. The nature, indeed, of their characters is such, that printing with moveable types would perhaps be impracticable. In painting and sculpture they are totally destitute of taste. Their idols are formed without any regard to proportion; and in painting they are totally ignorant of the rules of perspective, and the distribution of light and shade. Their architecture is as unsightly as unsolid, without elegance or convenience of design; without any settled proportion: "Mean in its appearance, and clumsy in the workmanship."† Lord Macartney, however, says, that although the Chinese architecture "sins against the ideas which we have imbibed of distribution, composition, and proportion, yet, upon the whole, it produces sometimes a most pleasing effect."‡ The unskilfulness of the Chinese in navigation has already been mentioned; but they have long been in possession of the compass. The Chinese compass is totally different from that which is used by the Europeans, and bears every mark of being an original invention. Their match-lock is supposed to have been derived from the Portugueze. In the pyrotechnical art, and in the preparation of colours, the Chinese stand unrivalled. In concluding this article, it may, in general terms, be observed, that in China every thing is uniform. One city, as already observed, is the model of another. The palace of a mandarin is scarcely distinguished from the cottage of a peasant, except by the space of ground which it occupies, and by being surrounded with a high wall. Every thing

* Barrow, p. 287, 291, 295, 299.

† Barrow, p. 330. ‡ Journal, ap. ibid. p. 137.

among the Chinese is regulated by practice; nothing is conducted by theory: in all their contrivances, simplicity is the leading feature. They never aim at sublimity.

Persons, manners, genius, national character.]—The Chinese and the Tartars, the two nations which inhabit this immense empire, being originally descended from the same stock, have a great resemblance of feature. The small eye elliptical at the corner next to the nose, is a predominant feature, both in the Chinese and the Tartar physiognomy. They have also the same high cheek bones and pointed chin. The natural complexion of both appears to be somewhat tawny, and its shades are deeper or lighter according to their southern or northern situation, and their greater or less exposure to the influence of the climate. Among the Manchoo-Tartars, however, are found some of a very fair and florid complexion, with light blue eyes, a straight, or even an acquiline nose, brown hair, and bushy beards. Some of these have more of the Greek than of the Tartar countenance. The external manners of the Chinese, are marked with the most ceremonious politeness, and seem to indicate the greatest mildness and benevolence of disposition, while some of their customs and usages denote the most singular unfeelingness, and the most savage brutality. The horrid practice of infanticide, sanctioned by custom, and tolerated by the government, seems to be carried to a shocking extent. The police of Pekin employs persons to go about the streets at an early hour every morning, for the purpose of picking up the children that have been thrown out in the night. The bodies are carried to a common pit without the walls, into which those that are still alive, as well as those

that are dead, are promiscuously thrown. According to the best accounts, no fewer than 9,000 infants, are thus inhumanly butchered by their unfeeling parents, or thrown out and buried alive every year in the city of Pekin ; and it is supposed that about an equal number are destroyed in the same manner in the other parts of the empire.* From this statement, it appears, that this horrid practice is more frequent in the capital than in the provinces, in the proportion of 110 for one, according to the received estimates of population. Dire poverty, and a total inability to provide for their offspring, is the excuse alledged for this unnatural practice, which evinces the total extinction of all parental feeling. In Sparta, weak and sickly children were destroyed, not by the parents, but by the authority and orders of the magistrates; and the exposure of infants was allowed and practised in ancient Rome, as well as among several other nations of antiquity; but in no part perhaps of the world has this horrid custom been carried to so great an extent as in China.

Another distinguishing and highly unfavorable characteristic of the Chinese manners, is the degradation of the female sex. The singular fashion of crippling their feet in their infancy, by means of small shoes and tight bandages, so as nearly to deprive them of the power of walking, seems to have originated in the tyrannical jealousy of the men, and long usage has established it as a fashion. In several provinces, especially toward the south, this absurd practice does not prevail. But if the women are there allowed the use of their limbs, it is only to render them more useful slaves. They are put to the most painful drudgery,

* Barrow, p. 170.

and in some instances literally yoked to the plough or the harrow.* In all cases the father sells his daughters for wives or concubines, to the best bidder; and in several parts of the empire, women are bought and sold like cattle.† Here, indeed, as among the ancients, the power of the parent over his children is absolute. He can sell his son for a slave, as well as his daughter, and this authority is often exercised. Polygamy, though allowed by the laws, is not very generally practised, the poverty of the people, and the difficulty of maintaining the offspring of one woman, necessarily limiting the extent of that evil. The diversions of the Chinese are insipid and puerile. Cock-fighting and quail fighting are universally in vogue. Their drama is contemptible, and their music without melody. Drunkenness is a vice scarcely known among the Chinese; but gaming is an universal propensity. The poor living of the great mass of the people, has already been described. The opulent, however, are greatly addicted to the indulgence of appetite.‡ Sumptuary laws set limits to the gratification of vanity in external expence; and the wealth, which is thus confined within doors, is displayed in the luxuries of the table. The funerals and the public festivals are the only occasions which allow the display of ostentatious magnificence. The Chinese funerals are extremely expensive and pompous. The whole apparatus is costly, and the procession proceeds in solemn pomp to the public cemetery, which is always at a distance from the city or village. At court, the display of Asiatic grandeur

* Barrow, p. 141, 541.

† See what has been said in speaking of the cities of Hong-choo-foo, and Soo-choo-fou, from the relations of the embassy.

‡ Sir George Staunton, vol. 2. ch. 3. p. 237.

is seen only at certain fixed festivals, such as the anniversary of the emperor's birth-day, the commencement of the new year, the ceremonial of holding the plough, and the reception of foreign ambassadors. On these occasions, the incalculable numbers of great officers of state, and their attendants, all robed in the richest silks, embroidered with the most brilliant colours, and ornamented with a profusion of gold and silver tissue, and the order, silence, and solemnity, with which they arrange and conduct themselves, are the most striking features of Chinese grandeur. From the various traits here brought forward from the best authorities, some idea may be formed of the general state of society in China. It has already been observed, that there is no distinction of ranks. One of the leading features in the policy of the government, is to keep all the subjects on a level, so that the distance between them and the sovereign may be as great as possible. The rigid sumptuary laws are also calculated to annihilate, as much as possible, all distinction in regard to external appearance. No other distinction exists than that of office; but the power of office is despotic through all its gradations. Every officer in the empire, from the lowest to the highest, is liable to receive a certain number of strokes of the bamboo cane, from his immediate superior, for the slightest misdemeanor; and this chastisement is liberally bestowed on the people.

From the aggregate of remarks which various writers have made on this singular nation, an estimate may be made of its general character. The national character of the Chinese is indeed more uniform than that of most other nations. A considerable difference, in this respect, indeed, is perceived between the

Chinese and the Tartars; the character of the latter is more bold and open, less marked with duplicity than that of the former people; but the Manshur courtiers are completely Chinese. The national character is composed of a strange mixture of apparently opposite features. The Chinese are, perhaps, of all nations, the most pusillanimous and timid, as well as the most mild in their manners, and at the same time the most cruel and unfeeling. They are wholly without hospitality and without compassion. Although injury is little to be apprehended from them, misfortune must not expect there relief or pity. There is scarcely any country where scenes of human distress are regarded with such cool indifference and inhumanity as in China. In regard to the national genius, it is certainly acute and penetrating; but from a train of causes, which would require a long dissertation to investigate, it is entirely singular. The Chinese discover no want of genius to conceive, nor of dexterity to execute; and their imitative powers are certainly of the first class.* But an universal contempt for every thing foreign, and a dislike to all innovation, are insuperable obstacles to improvement.

In this view of the modern state of China, I have entirely been guided by those judicious writers, who have so elegantly related the proceedings of the British embassy. It must, however, be observed, that their accounts differ greatly from the descriptions given by the missionaries.† The latter had their motives for exhibiting the Chinese in the most imposing point of view. The more powerful and magnificent, the more

* Barrow, p. 306, &c.

† Compare the accounts given by the British embassy with those of Du Halde, and other missionaries.

learned

learned and refined they represented the nation to be, the greater, our author observes, would be their triumph in the event of effecting a change in the national faith. Prudence also required that they should speak favorably of a people, under whose power and protection they had placed themselves for life. Another circumstance is also to be taken into consideration. The impression made on the mind by new objects, will, in a great measure, be determined by that already received from objects with which it has formerly been acquainted. From the middle to the end of the sixteenth century, China, when compared with Europe in general, had greatly the advantage, if not in science, at least in arts and manufactures, in the conveniencies and luxuries of life. The Chinese were, at that period, nearly in the same state in which they now are, and in which they are still likely to continue. One cannot, therefore, be surprised, if the impressions made on the minds of the Europeans, who visited this country, were powerfully felt, or if their descriptions seem to incline towards the marvellous. Perhaps, indeed, on a fair comparison of the state of China with that of Europe, from the middle to the end of the sixteenth century, the relations of the first missionaries will not appear much too highly embellished. And it seems that later writers have thought themselves bound to justify all the eulogiums which the former have bestowed on this empire, without taking into the account the progressive improvements of Europe. I have been somewhat diffuse in this article, as the state of an empire, which comprises the greatest portion of the human race that has ever been united in one political system, and which, in respect of the genius and character of its people, and in its maxims of policy, exhibits

bits so many striking peculiarities, is an object that merits particular attention. "What a grand and curious spectacle," says Sir George Staunton, "is here exhibited to the mind, of so large a proportion of the whole human race connected together in one great system of polity, submitting quietly, and through so considerable an extent of country, to one great sovereign; and uniform in their laws, their manners, and their language; but differing essentially in each of these respects from every other portion of mankind; and neither desirous of communicating with, nor forming any designs against the rest of the world."*

* The population of China, as already stated from Sir George Staunton, is considerably more than the double of that of all Europe.

CHINESE

CHINESE TARTARY.

THIS wide and interesting portion of Asia, from whence began to roll that tide of migration, conquest, and barbarism, which at different periods overwhelmed the civilization of Europe, Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, and India,* extends about 3560 English miles in length from east to west, and about 1250 in breadth from north to south. On the east, it is bounded by the ocean; on the south, by China Proper and Thibet; on the west, by Great Bucharia and the Kirgusses of independent Tartary; and on the north, by the Siberian dominions of Russia.

Face of the country.]—This extensive region is diversified with all the grand features of nature, extensive ranges of mountains, large rivers and lakes. Most of these, however, are very imperfectly known. The most singular feature is that vast elevated plain, or table land, which extends from the mountains of Belur Tag on the west, to those which separate the Kalhas from the Mandshurs in the east, and from the mountains of Thibet in the south, to the Altayan chain in the north.† This prodigious plain, which com-

* The Goths were, in the time of the emperor Valens, driven into the Roman empire by this mass of population rolling from the east. Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. ch. 26.

† D'Anville's map.

prises

prises the greatest part of Mongolia, and the country of the Kalmucs, is the most elevated continuous region on the face of the globe. It is intersected by some chains of mountains, and by the vast deserts of Cobi and Shamo, which seem to be continuous, and may be considered as the same. But the geography of these countries is too little known to authorize any pretension to precise description.

Mountains.]—The various mountainous ranges of central Asia have been so little explored, that many pages might be occupied in attempting to reconcile the different delineations of D'Anville, Islenief, and Pallas. Of all the mountains in this extensive portion of the globe, the great chain of Belur Tag, or the cloudy mountains on the west, supposed to be the Imaus of the ancients, and the Altai mountains on the north, described by Pallas and Tooke, are the most accurately known:* of the central ranges, and those on the frontier of Thibet, our knowledge is very imperfect.

Rivers.]—The rivers offer a subjec somewhat more luminous, or at least less disputed. The Amur is one of the largest. Rising near the Yablonoi mountains, where it is known by the name of the Argoon, it pursues an easterly course of about 1850 British miles. The Irtish also, and the Selinga, rise in central Asia. and run a considerable length of course in those countries before they enter the Russian territories. To these may be added the Yarkand, and several others of inferior note.

Lakes.]—In this extensive tract are some lakes of considerable extent: that of Zaizan is described as

* Pallas's Des. of Ruoses, vol. 6, p. 362.—Tooke's View Russ. Emp. vol. 1. book 2.

being

being about 150 miles in length; and that of Balkash, or Tengis, is nearly of the same dimensions.

Mineralogy.]—The mineralogy of central Asia, is a subject not less obscure than the rest of its natural history. Gold has been found in some parts; and there is reason to presume, that these countries would afford various metals in abundance, if industry and skill were exerted for their discovery.*

Soil and Climate.]—The soil of a country so extensive and so imperfectly known, cannot be assumed as a subject of description. The climate is of a more uniform nature, being chiefly remarkable for a degree of cold seldom experienced in the same latitudes, either in Asia or Europe. Pere Crebillon, who traversed these regions in the middle of summer, says, that in 41° of latitude, it was excessively cold in the beginning of June, and the country quite covered in the morning with hoar frost.† He describes the weather throughout the summer as variable and stormy. Sometimes it was warm, but the heat was always of short duration, often lasting only a few hours; even at that warmest season of the year, the cold was in general predominant. Chinese Tartary, or what may properly be denominated central Asia, is included within nearly the same parallels as France, Spain, Italy, and the southern parts of Germany; but its mountainous ridges, and the general elevation of the country, occasion an intenseness and continuance of cold, not to be expected from its geographical position.

Vegetable productions.]—Little is known of either the

* Korea produces gold, silver, and iron. Du Halde, vol. 4, p. 557.

† Father Crebillon's Trav. in Tartary ap. Du Halde, vol. 4, p. 236.

cultivated,

cultivated, or the spontaneous productions of those vast countries. Among the southern Mandshurs, and the people of little Bucharia, agriculture is not wholly neglected, nor are wheat and other kinds of grain unknown. But the most remarkable productions of Chinese Tartary with which we are acquainted, are the celebrated ginseng,* the favorite drug of the Chinese, and the rhubarb, so well known in the European practice of medicine. One distinguishing characteristic of the landscape of these wide regions, is the deficiency of wood. Some forests are seen near the rivers; but in general central Asia is described as presenting almost as great a scarcity of trees, as the deserts of Arabia and Africa.

Zoology.]—The zoology of this wild and extensive tract of country might, if completely explored, afford to the naturalist an almost infinite theme. The wild horse, of a mouse colour and diminutive size, the wild ass, and the grunting cow, are ranked among its chief singularities.

Curiosities and antiquities.]—The unexplored state of central Asia, leaves no room to expect a description of natural curiosities, although many may perhaps exist in those regions. And few monuments of antiquity remain to illustrate the former greatness of the Monguls. Whenever those immense tracts shall be fully explored, it is probable that sepulchral monuments, and other remains of antiquity, may be discovered. But the city of Caracorum, once the metropolis of the Mongalian empire, is so completely

* The ginseng, once thought peculiar to Chinese Tartary, is now cultivated with great success in Kentucky, and forms a valuable article of commerce from that country to Canton. Its culture is described by Michaux. Trav. p. 169, &c. For the rhubarb trade, see Cox Russ. Disc.

obliterated,

obliterated, that even the place of its situation is unknown.

Cities, towns, edifices.]—This extensive portion of Asia contains several towns, scattered for the most part at wide distances, and often separated by mountainous ridges, sandy deserts, or other large tracts of uncultivated country. Some of these are dignified with the title of cities; but they are generally constructed of wood, and can boast of little antiquity or importance.

Cashgar.]—Cashgar was once a considerable town, and gave name to a kingdom, the limits of which nearly corresponded with those of little Bucharia, but it is now greatly declined.* Several others appear in the maps; but most of them are known only by name; and, perhaps, some of them are no more than usual stations for tents among the Nomadic tribes.

History.]—The historical outlines of central Asia, have already been sketched under the article of Asiatic Russia. In this place, I shall therefore confine myself to a few general observations. In regard to the deluge of migration and conquest, which at different periods overwhelmed the civilized countries of Europe and Asia, the first impulse appears to have proceeded from the countries here under consideration. This was evidently the case in regard to the Mongul, or Tartar conquests, so famous in history. Mongalia was the primitive source of those tremendous movements, which, from that central point, were at once directed towards the east, the west, and the south, and spread desolation and carnage over China, Persia, Syria,

* The kingdom of Cashgar was subdued by Timur, and became a part of his empire, Gibbon, vol. 12, p. 10.

Russia,

Russia, Poland, and Hungary. But Mongalia was only the centre of the volcano. The various tribes of Northern Asia being subdued, swelled the armies of the victors; and agglomerated hordes, under the general appellation of Tartars, over-ran a great part of the world, and spread terror and consternation to the extremities of Europe and Ásia. But the division of their conquests having weakened their power, the progressive extension of the Russian and Chinese empires, has at last annihilated their independence. The victorious Monguls, after figuring through a few generations in the character of conquerors, sunk into the mass of the subjugated nations; and the remnant who remained in their native seats, have become subjects to Russia and China, countries over which they had formerly tyrannized. Such are the revolutions of empire. Such, especially, is the moving picture of the Asiatic dynasties.

Religion.]—The religion which is the most generally diffused in central Asia, is Shamanism, or the belief in a Supreme Author of nature, and numerous inferior spirits, who govern the world in subordination to his will. This, indeed, seems to have been the basis of all the ancient systems of Paganism, however varied by fancy, or disguised by allegory. In some parts of these extensive regions, the religion of Thibet appears to prevail.

Government.]—The government is, for the most part, left to the administration of native princes, or chiefs, who pay homage to the emperor of China. The laws appear to be chiefly traditional.

Military force.]—This extensive part of the Chinese empire, might probably muster a numerous, but ineffective

fective army. Those Nomadic tribes, even under the direction of China, can never be formidable to Russia, their rude valour being no match for European tactics.

Revenue.]—No estimate can be made of the revenue, which the emperor of China may derive from these countries; but it must be inconsiderable.

Language.]—In this immense extent of territory, three languages, radically different from each other, are spoken, each of which is subdivided into numerous dialects, as is always the case in extensive countries. The three radical languages of central Asia, are those of the Mandshurs, the Monguls, and the Tartars. Of these, the Mandshur appears to be the most elegant, although not written till the commencement of the seventeenth century.* It has derived importance, as well as refinement, from the rule of the Mandshur dynasty over China, and begins to grow fashionable at the court of Pekin; where, in process of time, it will probably supplant the Chinese. In the enunciation it is full, sonorous, and far from being disagreeable. The character is beautiful, and, like the Chinese, it is written in perpendicular columns; but beginning on the left side of the paper, instead of the right, as is the case in writing the former language.†

Literature.]—The native literature of central Asia is little known, and is certainly of little importance, although it appears that the Monguls and Tartars, in the flourishing period of their empire, were not totally averse to scientific and literary pursuits.‡ Some of the successors of Zinghis Khan encouraged learning;

* For a curious account of the Tartar or Mandshur language, and the nicety of their mode of writing, see Du Halde, vol. 4, p. 198, &c.

† Barrow's China, p. 270.

‡ See Historical View of Asiatic Russia.

 but

but we have no precise information of the extent of their attainments; and the Monguls, like the Arabians, seem to have cultivated letters in the conquered countries, especially at Samarchand, and on the banks of the Volga, more successfully than in their primitive seats. The native literature of the Mandshurs can neither be important nor ancient, as their language began so late to be written. The imported literature, however, must be considerable, since the late emperor caused the best Chinese books to be translated into the Mandshur language.

Commerce and manufactures.]—The commerce and manufactures of these countries are too inconsiderable for notice. The chief articles of trade are rhubarb and ginseng: to these may be added horses, of which there is an excellent breed in the Mandshur country.

Persons, manners, &c.]—The Monguls and the Mandshurs are but little distinguishable from each other in persons and manners. Those of the Monguls have already been briefly described in treating of Asiatic Russia. The Mandshurs, from their intercourse with China, appear to have made nearer approaches to civilization. They imitate the Chinese in their dress, but in their persons they are more robust. The fair sex adorn their heads with natural or artificial flowers. An eminent writer pleasingly describes the happy temper and perpetual cheerfulness of these Nomadic nations.*

Island of Sagalion.]—The large island of Sagalion, extending from the 46th to the 54th degree of north latitude, or about 550 English miles in length by about 90 in breadth, was first explored by that illustrious

* Du Halde, vol. 4, p. 132.

but

but unfortunate navigator, La Peyrouse. This island, which is divided from Jesso by a strait of about twenty miles in breadth, seems to have some little trade with the Japaneze, the Mandshurs, and the Russians. The inhabitants are described as an affable and intelligent people. In their persons they appear to have little resemblance, either to the Mandshurs or the Chinese.

THIBET.

THIS celebrated country, though one of the most interesting, is one of the least known portions of central Asia. Amidst the uncertainty, as well as deficiency of materials, this article must necessarily be short. In such a chaos of contradiction and doubt, brevity may be regarded as the chief merit of description. According to our most recent maps, Thibet extends from the 75th to the 101st degree of longitude, and from the 27th to the 36th degree of north latitude, a length of about 1,337 geographical, or 1,548 English miles in length from west to east, and 540 geographical, or 625 English miles from south to north. It is, however, to be observed, that all our maps of those regions are considered as very defective.* Neither the extent nor boundaries of this country are known with any degree of precision; but its dimensions seem rather to exceed than fall short of those which are here assigned. The north-east part of Thibet appears to have been the southern division of the celebrated Tangut of Oriental history. From the accounts of late travellers we may collect an idea of its general features; but neither Chinese, nor European research, has yet illustrated its particular geography.† The whole country appears

* See the contradictions and uncertainties of D'Anville, Rennel, and other geographers.

† The emperor of China sent two lamas to make a survey and construct

to

to be extremely elevated, besides being bounded and intersected by extensive chains of mountains of a prodigious height, and covered with perpetual snow. The western parts of Thibet are totally unknown; immense masses of mountains and eternal snows, having hitherto rendered those regions inaccessible to conquerors and travellers. None of these mountainous ranges, which intersect Thibet, have yet been described with any degree of accuracy.*

Rivers.]—Chinese Tartary and Thibet may be regarded as the heart of Asia; the central and elevated regions from whence descend the immense rivers which water China, exterior India, and Hindoostan. Thibet, in particular, contains the sources of the Indus, the Ganges, and the Burrampooter, which still remain curious objects of geographical investigation.† Of these, the Burrampooter, which runs a course of about 1,000 miles before it leaves the confines of the country, must be regarded as the chief Thibettian river.

Lakes.]—The Chinese Lamas, in their imperfect map of this country, have delineated a number of lakes, no improbable feature, indeed, of those Alpine regions. One of these, in the northern parts, is said to produce the crude borax.‡ In winter, the lakes of Thibet are generally frozen to a great depth.

a map of Thibet; but the war with the Eluts, and other unfavorable circumstances, rendered their work superficial and defective. For an account of this war, see Du Halde, vol. 4, p. 452, &c.

* Thibet was known to Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveller, under the name of Tangut; and its geography, as well as that of Chinese Tartary, is little better known than it was in his time.

† See on these subjects, Rennel, p. 306, &c.—Tieffenthaler, ap. Bernoilli's Collection, tom. 2, p. 351, &c.

‡ For a curious account of this singular production, see Turner's Journey, p. 406.

Mineralogy.]—Thibet affords every indication of a rich mineralogy; but the extreme scarcity of fuel renders the working of mines impracticable. In Thibet Proper, gold is found in great quantities, sometimes in large masses, sometimes in the form of dust, in the beds of rivers.* There is also lead, cinnabar, and rock salt. Bootan is not known to afford any metal but iron, although there are some indications of copper. Mineral waters abound; and the Thibettians are not unacquainted with their salutary use.

Soil.]—The soil of Thibet Proper presents a general aspect of sterility; the country abounding with rocky hills, destitute of vegetation, and extensive arid plains of almost the same unpromising appearance. This remarkably naked aspect strongly indicates a mineral country, the fumes arising from masses of metallic ores being poisonous to vegetation. Bootan, the southernmost part of Thibet, possesses a soil of quite opposite qualities, and displays a perpetual verdure.† The country is overspread with fields and villages, and even the sides of the mountains are improved by the hand of industry.

Climate.]—The climate of Thibet, even in the 27th degree of latitude, is intensely cold. In the periodical return and duration of the seasons, a remarkable uniformity prevails; and the same division of them takes place here as in the more southern region of Bengal. The spring, from March till May, is marked by a variable atmosphere, heat, thunder storms, and showers. From June to September, heavy and continued rains fill the rivers, which carry their inundations into Bengal. From October to March, the sky scarcely ever obscured by fogs or clouds, is uniformly

* Du Halde, vol. 4, p. 163.

† Turney's Journey, p. 354.

serene.

serene. During three months of this season, the cold is extremely intense. The climate of Bootan may be regarded as temperate when compared with that of Thibet Proper; but even in the former country the winters are very severe.* The distinguishing characteristic of the Thibettian climate, is that extreme cold, which, under the warm parallel of Cairo and northern Africa, rivals the wintry rigours of Petersburg and Siberia.

Vegetable productions.]—Amidst the rocky sterility and intense cold of Thibet Proper, no great vegetable abundance can be expected. Bootan, on the contrary, is overspread with cultivated fields. Throughout Thibet, wheat, peas, and barley, are the chief objects of agricultural industry. On the cessation of the rains, the crops are speedily matured by a powerful sun; and the dry and serene autumn is favorable to the Thibettian harvest. The naked and sterile appearance of Thibet Proper has already been noticed; but Bootan displays many orchards of fruit trees, and abounds with extensive forests.†

Zoology.]—The zoology of Thibet appears more curious and important than its vegetation. Its rocky wilds afford pasture to numerous flocks of sheep and goats, besides some herds of cattle, and abound with wild fowl and game. The goats are celebrated for their fine hair, which is manufactured into shawls at Cashmire.‡ The grunting cattle, of which the flowing and glossy tails, are an article of ornamental luxury in the east, are found here, as well as in other parts of central Asia. The musk deer is one of the rarities of this country; and the wild horse may also be reckoned among its quadrupeds. Thibet is infested with nume-

* Turner's Journey, p. 300. † Ibid. p. 216. ‡ Forster's Trav. vol. 2, p. 18.

rous beasts of prey of the smaller, but few or none of the larger kind, In Bootan, the horses and horned cattle are of a diminutive size. The sheep are numerous but small : their wool is soft, and their mutton excellent: the latter is generally eaten raw, and when dried in the frosty air is regarded by our author as not disagreeable.* Few wild animals, except monkeys, are observed in Bootan.

Natural curiosities.]—This Alpine region undoubtedly contains a great number of sublime scenes ; but few of these have been exposed to scientific observation. Mr. Saunders, who accompanied Mr. Turner in his journey to Thibet, observed a singular rock, forming in front several angular semi-columns of great circumference, and some hundred feet in height, which projecting from a mountain over a considerable fall of water, had a grand and picturesque appearance.†

Antiquities.] As the temples, monasteries, and sepulchral monuments in Thibet are generally constructed of stone, it is not improbable that some relics of remote antiquity might be discovered, if ever this country should be disclosed to the eye of science. But even were this the case, the want of historical and chronological information relative to this region, would impede the elucidation of their origin.

Cities and towns.] Of the cities and towns of Thibet, as little is known, as of its geographical features. The capital is Lassa, situated in a spacious plain, almost in the centre of Thibet. It is only of small extent, but the houses, which are built of stone, are spacious and lofty.‡ The mountain of Putala, on

* Turner's Journey, 302.

† This curious object is described in Turner's Journey.

‡ Rennel, 306. Bernouillé, 3, 227,

which

which stands the palace of the Grand Lama, is seven miles to the east of the city. Several other names appear in the maps, some of which, in all probability, designate only mean villages.

Edifices.] Among the Thibettian edifices, the monasteries seem to hold a distinguised rank. One of the chief is that of Teshoo Lomboo described by Mr. Turner, as containing between 200 and 300 houses, inhabited by monks, besides mausoleums, temples, and the palace of the Sovereign Lama. The buildings are all of stone, none of them less than two stories high, with flat roofs; and the central window projecting from the wall, forms a balcony. Some of the palaces and fortresses are described and delineated by Mr. Turner, and the architecture seems far from being contemptible. Bridges also, of various fantastic forms, are seen in several parts of the country.

History.]—The history of Thibet is not less obscure than its geography. It is probably unimportant; but the establishment of its religious and political system might form an interesting feature. Mr. Gibbon supposes the Lama of Thibet to have been the myterious Prester John of the middle ages.* This country under the name of Tangut, was known to Marco Polo the celebrated Venetian traveller, who informs us that it had been ravaged by the Monguls, and in his time was almost desolate. It was for some time governed by secular princes; and the Lama resided at Lassaf with a power resembling that of the Deiri or spiritual prince of Japan. But that tribe of the Monguls called Eluts, conquered the secular prince, and transferred all the power to the Lama.† In 1792, the Emperor of

* Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 8, p. 344.

† Du Halde, vol. 4, p. 50.

China

China sent an army to protect the Lama from the hostile attempts of the Nipalese. The Chinese have now established military posts on the frontiers, and Thibet is now under the protection, or rather the dominion of China.*

Religion and government.] The religious and political system of Thibet is the most interesting feature of the country, and forms a curious circumstance in the history of human opinions. The religion seems to be the schismatical offspring of that of the Hindoos, to which it has a close affinity in many important particulars, although it be different in several doctrinal points, as well as external forms. The principal idol in the temples of Thibet is the Budha of Bengal, who is worshipped under various names, throughout the the wide extent of Tartary, and among all the nations to the east of the Burhampooter.† The same places of popular esteem and religious resort are equally respected in Thibet and Bengal, and in both countries the water of the Ganges is held in equal veneration. The ceremonial of public worship differs greatly from that of the Hindoos. The Thibettians assemble in great numbers to perform their religious service, which they chaunt in alternate recitative and chorus, accompanied by a numerous band of music. "Whenever I heard these congregations," says Mr. Turner, "they forcibly recalled to my recollection, the solemnity and sound of the Roman Catholic mass."‡ From the resemblance of many of its ceremonies, and other externals, to those of the Catholics, Father Crebillon

* Turner's Journey, p. 441. Staunton's Embassy to China, vol. 2, p. 227.

† Turner's Journey, p. 306. See Col. Syme's Embassy to Ava, vol. 1, p. 253, and Kamfer's History of Japan, vol. 4. ch. 6.

‡ Turner, p. 306.

conjectured

conjectured that the religion of the Lamas had been originally derived from the Armenian or Nestorian Christians, about the time of Koblai Khan, and afterwards mixed with the doctrines of the Bonzes of China.* Du Halde however, seems to lay no stress on this opinion, which indeed has no other basis than random conjecture.† The distinguishing and most singular characteristic of this religion, which, as well as Shamanism, is diffused over the whole of central Asia, is the peculiar refinement of the eastern metempsicosis applied to the Sovereign Pontiff or Lama. This vicegerent and representative of the Deity is supposed to be immortal, being renewed through an endless succession of those sacerdotal sovereigns. Whenever the Grand Lama seems to die of age and infirmity, his soul is supposed only to leave a crazy habitation, in order to seek for one that is younger and better, and which is discovered by marks known only to the priests, in whose order the new Pontiff always appears. The Teshoo Lama, who is the second in authority and sanctity of character, seems to be the principal agent in this investigation; and as he acts as regent, during the minority of the sovereign, it is easy to perceive that he consults his own interest in discovering the sacred marks in some child, while his power and influence secures him a party among the inferior Lamas, to corroborate his evidence. When Mr. Turner was at Lassa, the Grand Lama was an infant incapable of speech; and the Teshoo Lama was in consequence, the actual sovereign. The Grand Lama, besides his spiritual authority, which is so widely extended, enjoys the absolute temporal as well as spiritual sovereignty

* The Bonzes are the worshippers of Fo.

† Du Halde, vol. 4. p. 188 and 460.

over

over Thibet.* In fine, the Egyptian priests themselves never hit on a more refined, or a more successful scheme for establishing sacerdotal power, over the minds and bodies of men. The government of Thibet is so interwoven with the religion, that no distinction can be discovered. The whole is sacerdotal, all authority spiritual and temporal, residing in the priesthood. The Grand Lamas, however, were generally accustomed to appoint a secular agent, an office at this time probably vested in the Emperor of China, who is the most powerful professor, and the avowed protector of their religion. Boutan is governed by a subordinate Rajah, whose authority is far from being either firm or extensive. In Thibet monastic institutions are carried to an extraordinary extent. A large number of the Thibettians live in a state of celibacy, buried in their monasteries, which are exceedingly numerous, containing crowds of gylongs or monks, with a few annees or nuns.

Army, revenues.] Of the military force, and the revenues of Thibet, no estimate can be formed; but neither of these can be considerable.

Commerce and manufactures.] The chief trade of Thibet is with China, from whence considerable quantities of tea are brought into the country. Some traffic is also carried on with Bengal, the Thibettians sending thither gold dust, borax and musk, and receiving in return, broad cloths, spices, emeralds, sapphires, &c.† On the whole, the commerce of a country like Thibet, cannot be considered as important. Some religious

* But although absolute monarch over Thibet, he is, as already observed, dependent on the Emperor of China. Sir Geo. Staunton, vol. 2. 227.

† A considerable quantity of gold is likewise sent to China. Du Halde, vol. 4. p. 163.

prejudice

prejudice prevents the establishment of a mint in Thibet, but the money of Nipal is current in the country. The manufactures are unimportant, the shawls being chiefly manufactured at Cashmire; but there are some of woollen cloth.

Population and political importance.] No estimate of the population of Thibet can rest on any other grounds than vague conjecture. In general, however, it may be said that it appears to be exceedingly scanty. The country being almost every where mountainous, and the climate, notwithstanding its southerly situation, intensely cold, the people are thinly scattered, and the number of males is said greatly to exceed that of females, a physical singularity for which no satisfactory cause is assigned.* No political importance can be ascribed to Thibet, and it has no political relations, except with the court of Pekin.

Language, literature, &c.] The Thibettian language has never been properly investigated. The literature is mostly of the religious kind; and the method of printing is the same as in China: the paper is manufactured from the fibrous roots of a small shrub. The Thibettians seem to have made a considerable progress in civilization, but little in the sciences; and their rudely sculptured idols are not calculated to excite any favorable opinion of their attainments in the arts.

Persons, manners, customs, &c.] The people of Thibet are generally stout, with something of the Tartaric feature, and a ruddy, brown complexion, indicating health and vigour. It may be regarded as a remarkable characteristic of their manners, that the polygamy of this country assumes a different form from that of all other Oriental regions, the women being indulged

* Du Halde, vol. 4. 444.

in

in a plurality of husbands, instead of the reverse. Among any number of brothers, the eldest possesses the privilege of chusing a wife, who stands in the same relation to all the others. The Thibettians do not bury their dead, but leave the bodies exposed to beasts and birds of prey, in walled areas. The bodies of the inferior priests are burned, and their ashes preserved in little hollow images; but that of the Grand Lama is preserved entire in a shrine, as an object of pious veneration.* Of the national character of the Thibettians, it can only be said, that Mr. Turner represents it as extremely gentle and amiable.

* This sketch of Thibet is taken chiefly from Mr. Turner's interesting narrative, as the most recent authority, but as it embraces only a small part of the country, it cannot much elucidate the general geography.

INDEPENDENT

INDEPENDENT TARTARY.

CHAP. I.

Situation—Extent—Boundaries—Face of the Country—Mountains—Rivers—Canals—Lakes—Mineralogy—Mineral Waters—Soil—Climate—Vegetable Productions—Zoology—Natural Curiosities—Antiquities and Artificial Curiosities.

Situation.]—UNDER the vague appellation of Tartary, ancient geographers comprehended a great part of Asia, a tract of country of greater extent than all Europe, and inhabited by different nations and tribes. The country now denominated Chinese Tartary, was never inhabited by any nation of Tartars, and even in Siberia, none of their tribes were ever settled, until their subjection to the Monguls, and their incorporation with that people. This was the circumstance that gave celebrity to the Tartars, and spread abroad their colonies. Independent Tartary, which forms the original seat of the nation, is bounded on the west by the Caspian Sea, on the north by Asiatic Russia, on the east by the Chinese empire, and on the south by Persia. The extent from east to west, may be computed at nearly 900 English miles, and from north to south, at about 1400 or 1500; but a great part of this length consists of scarcely any thing but extensive deserts. The chief divisions are those of the

sandy

sandy plains in the north, possessed by the Kirgusses, and some inconsiderable Tartar tribes, the central part; between the mountains of Argun on the north, and those of Ak Taw on the south; and the southern portion, consisting of Sogdiana and some other provinces, which modern geographers generally comprise under the name of Great Bucharia, of which the chain of mountains denominated Belur Tag, supposed to be the ancient Imaus, forms the eastern boundary, dividing it from Little Bucharia, recently conquered by China, and now subject to that empire.

Face of the country.] A great part of the northern division is comprehended in the desert stepp of Issim, already mentioned in the description of Asiatic Russia, consists chiefly in barren and sandy plains, interspersed with fertile tracts, which afford pasturage for the herds of the wandering Kirgusses. The central part being watered by the river Sihon, the Jaxartes of the ancients, which, rising in the Belur ridge, receives in its course the tributary streams of the northern and southern mountains, displays a considerable degree of fertility. The southern division is described as one of the most fertile and agreeable countries in the world, being but little encumbered with mountains, but charmingly diversified with hills and vallies, blessed with a fruitful soil and delightful climate.

Mountains.]—The Belur Tag, the supposed Imaus already mentioned, is according to all accounts, a vast Alpine range covered with perpetual snow, but never yet explored by any intelligent traveller. The mountains of Argun and Ak Taw, as well as those of Gaur in the south of Bucharia, seem to be branches striking out from this immense chain.

Rivers.]—The principal rivers are the Anus or Gi-

† hom;

hom, the ancient Oxus, and the Sihon, or Sirr, the ancient Jaxartes. These two rivers rise in the Belur mountains, and discharge themselves into the lake, or sea of Aral, the former after a course of about 900, and the latter of about 550 English miles. There are several other inferior streams, but their course is very little known.*

Lakes.]—The lake, or sea of Aral, is about 100 miles to the east of the Caspian, with which Pallas thinks it might once have communicated, although, from the elevation of some of the intervening deserts, it is more probable that they could only have been joined by a strait.† The sea of Aral is about 200 miles in length, and about 70 in breadth. Being surrounded with sandy deserts, its shores have been little explored. Its waters are salt, like those of the Caspian; and there are many saline lakes in the vicinity. The next lake, in regard to extent, is that of Tengis. There are also several others, of which geographers have little knowledge.

Mineralogy.]—The mineralogy of Tartary has not been much explored, the inhabitants not having industry sufficient for the pursuit. It appears, however, that in the middle ages, a variety of metals and minerals were found in this country. On these subjects, however, little can be said with precision.

Soil.]—In regard to the soil, little can be added to what is already said in speaking of the three divisions, or the northern, middle, and southern portions of this country.

* It is not yet known whether the Sogd, or river of Samarchand, falls into the Amu, or is lost in the lake of Karagol. So very imperfect is the geography of those countries. Pink. Geog. vol. 2.

† Pallas's Latter Travels, vol, 1. ch. 3. p. 100.

Climate.]—The same may be said in regard to the climate. It is universally allowed to be pleasant and healthful. Independent Tartary corresponds in latitude with Spain, Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor, and appears to enjoy as favorable a climate. All writers agree in representing that of Bucharia as extremely salubrious and delightful.

Vegetable productions.]—The botany of those regions has not been examined by any modern traveller. But from what has been said on the soil and climate, it is safe to conclude that the principal productions are similar to those of the European countries which lie under the same parallels. This observation is confirmed by the positive evidence of Ebn Haukal, who wrote a copious and elegant description of the state of this country as it existed in the tenth century. This venerable writer speaks with rapture of the corn fields, rich meadows, and pastures, of the orchards and gardens in the Sogd, or country about Samarchand; and describes the fruits of that district as the finest in the world.* This country also appears to produce a great quantity of cotton.†

Animal productions.]—The zoology of Independent Tartary has been as little examined as its botany. It is known, however, that the chief useful animals abound here as well as in Europe. The horses are numerous and excellent: the camel is not uncommon: oxen and sheep are good and plentiful.‡

* Ebn Haukal ap. Pink. Geog. vol. 2. p. 404.

† Coxe's Russ. Dis. p. 319.—Pallas's Latter Trav. vol. 1. ch. 8. p. 284, 286.

‡ Lambskins from Bucharia form an article in the imports of Russ. Coxe ubi supra.

Natural

Natural curiosities.]—In regard to natural curiosities, this region is too little known to enable us to speak on the subject with any degree of certainty.

Antiquities.]—Notwithstanding the former power of the Monguls and Tartars, few monuments of their former greatness now remain. Although these people made some progress in the arts of civilization during the existence of their short-lived and distracted empire, they never erected any magnificent works.

CHAP. II.

Principal Towns and Cities—Edifices.

THE chief city of Great Bucharia, and both in magnitude and fame the most considerable of all these regions, is Samarchand, once the principal residence of that terrible conqueror Timur, or Tamerlane, and the metropolis of an empire more extensive than that of Rome, when in the meridian of its greatness. It stands on the southern bank of the river Sogd, from which the district has received the name of Sogdiana.* Of this celebrated capital we have no recent account; but since the days of Timur, it appears to have greatly declined. A little before the commencement of the last century, it was fortified only with ramparts of earth; and the houses were built of hardened clay, although some were of stone. The castle was in a ruinous state; and the khan of Great Bucharia commonly encamped in the adjacent meadows. This city had once a great trade with India, and also with Constantinople and Bagdad. The invention of paper is by some supposed to be derived from Samarchand; and the excellence of that which was there manufactured from silk, recommended it throughout all the countries of Asia.†

* The Sogd is described as a terrestrial paradise. Ebn Haukal ap. Pink. ubi supra.

† Anderson's Hist. Com. vol. 1, p. 194.

Bokara.]--

Bokara.]—Bokara is situated on the same river, above 100 miles below Samarchand, and has sometimes been considered as the capital of Bucharia. It stands on a rising ground; and in 1771 was a large and populous city, surrounded with a slender rampart of earth. The houses were built of clay, and the mosques of brick. Here were some manufactures of soap and calico; and the adjacent country abounded in cattle, cotton, and rice. So early as the tenth century, it was celebrated for its manufactures of fine linen.

Balk.]—Balk is situated on the Dehash, a river which rises in the southern mountains of Gaur, and falls into the Amu. This city was, about a century ago, large and populous, and the most considerable in this quarter, the houses being of brick or stone, and the castle almost entirely of marble, which abounds in the neighbouring mountains. It was then subject to its particular khan of the Usbecs. The people were the most civilized of all the Tartars, and manufactured beautiful silks from the produce of the country. Balk is the great mart of trade between Bucharia and Hindostan.

In this condensed view of Independent Tartary, it is necessary to observe, that the geography of those regions is extremly imperfect, and the same remark may be made on several other countries of Asia, and still more on those of Africa and America. Those parts have not been explored by intelligent travellers. In regard both to their physical and moral circumstances, therefore, nothing but vague information and loose conjecture can be obtained. When we consult the best geographical works on these subjects, their principal efforts seem directed towards detecting each others errors, but often without being able to establish

 any

any thing more certain in their place. Maps, indeed, of all those countries are made; but succeeding enquirers discover them to be erroneous, without being able to rectify their mistakes, except in some trifling instances. The reason is obvious. Maps are drawn in the closet without any substantial materials: conjecture may be made to supply the place of information: imagination may plan the course of rivers, and the direction of mountainous chains; but it is impossible either to describe or delineate a country that has not been explored. In the countries now under consideration, D'Anville himself has been obliged to have recourse to Marco Polo, who travelled in the thirteenth century. Pinkerton discovers several of his errors, but is himself obliged to refer to Ebn Haukal: so great is the deficiency of modern information, in regard to central Asia, as well as many other regions of the globe.*

* Pinkerton observes, "the wretched state of imperfection" in which the geography of those countries remains. Geog. vol, 2. p. 374.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Historical View—General Progress of Society—Of Arts and Sciences—Literature and Commerce.

History.]—THE history of Independent Tartary is a subject as obscure as its geography, although its natives have had so considerable a share in events, which have changed the destinies of Europe and Asia. At such periods, indeed, the outlines of their history have been fatally conspicuous, but the particulars have always been confused. Great Bucharia, the most important part of this extensive country, was, in early ages, an independent kingdom; but part of it at least became subject to the Persians after the establishment of their vast monarchy by Cyrus. It cannot, however, be expected, that the boundaries of those ancient kingdoms should be known. Indeed, the modern limits of many of the Asiatic states are very doubtful; and their extension or contraction depends greatly on temporary force and incidental circumstances. Though the southern parts of these countries remained subject to the Persian monarchies, their allegiance seems to have been sometimes doubtful, and the authority of the successors of Cyrus often precarious. To the Greeks and the Romans these countries were known by the names of Bactriana and Sogdiana, the former being the southern, and the latter the northern part, of what is now known by the name of Bucharia; but ancient and modern limits cannot be supposed to coin-

cide. This country is celebrated on many accounts, having produced several men famous in letters and in arms. Zoroaster, one of the most ancient and celebrated philosophers of the east, is said to have been a native of Bactria. On the fall of the Persian monarch, it became a Grecian kingdom, and after many changes, a part of the vast Mongalian empire of Tschinghis Khan, which having, through its diffused extension and intestine divisions, fallen to decay, was revived in Bucharia by Timur or Tamerlane. The chief political and military events of the reigns of those conquerors, have already been exhibited in the sketch of Mongalian history, comprised in that of Asiatic Russia. A repetition would therefore be useless; and the succeeding transactions in this country, at least since the foundation of the Mongul empire in Hindostan, have had little influence on the affairs of the world.

The northern parts of Independent Tartary have also been the cradle of great events. Historians bring the Goths, the Turks, and most of the barbarian hordes, which have changed the destiny of so many nations, from the countries on the north and the north-east of the Caspian Sea, from the deserts now occupied by the rambling Kirgusses, and from the countries towards the mouth of the Volga, now subject to Russia. The history of their migrations, however, is unknown. The wandering hordes of those vast regions were constantly in motion, advancing towards the west; but it is impossible to say where the first impulse was given, although some think it to have been farther east towards the confines of China;* but in

* See Gibbon on this subject. Description of the Roman Empire, ubi supra.

spite

spite of all research, the subject remains obscure, as the civilized world had no knowledge of those nations till they made their appearance on its frontiers. The Huns, indeed, who made their appearance in Dacia, on the north side of the Danube, in the reign of the emperor Valens, and forced the Goths to seek refuge in the Roman empire, are traced from the frontiers of China, and seemed to have passed in a continued course of depredation, occupying the countries left vacant by the Gothic and Slavonic tribes, in their progress towards Europe. The Turks, by some considered as a branch of the Hunish nation, but more probably a distinct tribe, were, as early as the sixth century, settled on the shores of the Caspian, and from them those regions derived the name of Turkistan. From this centre of their power issued those numerous Turkish armies, which effected such great revolutions in Asia, and at last established an empire, which extending itself into Europe, overwhelmed that of Byzantium. The original seat of the Turkish nation, as far as its history can be traced, was in the Altai mountains, and along the banks of the Irtish.* From thence they spread to the Caspian Sea. They were so powerful, as to give disturbance to China and Persia; and, as before observed, in treating of Asiatic Turkey, they gave to Heraclius, the eastern emperor, effectual assistance in his war with Chosroes, king of Persia, in the seventh century.† But this original Turkish state having separated into two great parts, which were soon after subdivided into various petty khannates, several of these became subject to the victorious

* Tooke's Russ. Emp. vol. 1. book 2. sect. 4.

† Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp.

Arabs,

Arabs, who had conquered Persia.* At last the primitive Turks having been introduced as mercenary troops into the service of the Caliphate, after having for some time been the support of that declining empire, ultimately contributed to precipitate its fall, and founded considerable states on its ruins.† The Turkish tribes began by degrees to grow conspicuous, and gradually produced great revolutions, both in Asia and Europe. The Tartars, so famous in the middle ages, are only a branch of the great Turkish stem. The appellation even of Tartar, which is probably derived from the Chinese, is unknown to the Persians and the Arabians.‡

That part of Tartary which occupies the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea, and extends to what is properly called Bucharia, formerly constituted a flourishing Turkish, or Tartar kingdom, under the name of Karism. In the time of Zinghis Khan, it included Chorazan, and part of Great Bucharia, and made a formidable resistance to the arms of that conqueror. Few of the conquests of Zinghis were effected with greater difficulty, or with greater destruction of the inhabitants. On the annihilation of the Mongul's Tartarian empire, this state again became independent;§ but at present it is almost restricted to the district of Kieva, its capital, and contains only five walled towns.

Kieva.]—Kieva is situated at the distance of 450 or 460 miles from the Caspian Sea, on a rising ground,

* Tooke's Russ. Emp. vol. 1. book 2. sect. 4.

† Gibbon's Dec. Rom. Emp. vol. 9,

‡ Tooke's Russ, Emp. ubi supra.

§ Abulgari, the author of the genealogical history of the Turks, which has been translated into Russian, English, French, and German, was khan of Karism. He reigned from 1643 to 1663.

and is surrounded by a thick rampart of earth, much higher than the houses, with turrets at small distances, and a wide and deep ditch full of water. It is of considerable extent; but the houses are mean, being low, and mostly built of clay.* The environs produce cotton, and a small quantity of silk, some of which is here manufactured. The Kievans are regarded as the most cunning and treacherous of all the Tartars. They trade with Bucharia and Persia, in cattle, furs, and hides, which they procure from the Kirgusses; and they also carry considerable quantities of raw cotton to Orenburg.† This Tartar state is independent, and has its own khan, whose authority is greatly controlled by that of the Mulla Bashi, or chief priest. Since 1494, the Usbec Tartars have been the ruling power in Bucharia. Having expelled Sultan Baber, with his Monguls, these Tartarian victors founded a powerful monarchy, which flourished under successive khans till the middle of the seventeenth century, about which time it fell asunder, and Bucharia appears to have been ever since divided into a number of petty states. In 1739, Nadah Shah reduced Kieva and Bokara; but Balk and Samarchand have, as far as is known, always maintained their independence.

* Hanway, vol. 1. p, 241, &c.
† Pallas's Russ. vol. 3.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Present State, political and moral — Religion — Government — Laws— Army—Navy — Revenues—Commerce—Manufactures—Population— Political importance—Language—Literature—Polite Arts—Education —Manners and Customs—National Character.

THIS chapter must, from the deficiency of modern information, be confined within very narrow bounds.

Religion.]—Throughout Independent Tartary, the religion is the Mahomedan, of the sect of Sunni. The Kirgusses in the north were Scamanians till the commencement of the seventeenth century, about which time they embraced Mahomedanism; but of nations in so rude a state, the religious ideas may reasonably be supposed to be very indistinct and obscure.

Government.]—The government of the khans appears to be despotic, but administered with lenity; as, among nations in such a state as the Tartars, the power of the sovereign must depend much on popular opinion and favour. Like all the Mahomedan princes, the khans are subject to the control of the koran, which must operate in some measure as a check to despotism.

Laws.]—In regard to laws, we know of none that exist among those people, except those of the koran.

Army, &c.]—No estimate can be made of the armies which those countries might raise, as we have no knowledge of their military establishments, nor any means

of computing either their population or revenues. It is scarcely necessary to mention that they have no navy. And in their present divided state, they cannot be considered as having any political importance.

Commerce.]—The Bucharians have, during many ages, carried on a considerable trade by caravans, with Persia, Hindostan, and China. At present, they trade also with the Russians at Astrachan and Kiakta.* It may not be amiss to observe, that the best rhubarb is furnished by the Bucharian merchants, who procure it from Thibet, and other countries dependent on the Chinese empire. This celebrated and useful drug, being formerly imported from Bucharia by way of Turkey, acquired the name of Turkey rhubarb ;† but Kiakta, on the Russian and Chinese frontier, is at present the chief mart for that commodity. It is also worthy of remark, that the rhubarb procured from Kiakta, by way of Petersburg, is greatly superior to that which is imported directly from Canton.‡ The Bucharians export great quantities of cotton, which is one of their native products.

Manufactures.]—On the subject of manufactures, little can be added to what has already been said in speaking of their principal towns, Samarchand, Balk, and Bokara. Being centrically situated between Russia, China, Hindostan, and Persia, the Bucharians and Tartars are carriers of merchandize rather than manufacturers.

Language.]—The Tartarian language is the Turcomanic, or old Turkish.§ Of this, different dialects are spoken by the Usbecs and all the Tartar tribes.

* Pallas's Latter Travels, vol. 1, ch. 8.—Coxe's Russ. Disc. p. 351, &c.
† Coxe's ubi supra. ‡ Coxe, p. 363.
§ Tooke's Russ. Emp. vol. 1, book 2, sect. 4.

But

But the original language of the native Bucharians is a subject that has not been investigated.

Literature]---Bucharian literature would furnish a copious theme. Samarchand was once a distinguished school of Oriental learning, which was cultivated by several of its sovereigns. So late as the beginning of the last century, it was still one of the most celebrated of the Mahomedan universities. In regard to the polite arts, we hear of few splendid specimens. As to their mode of education, we possess no intelligence that can authorise us to speak on the subject.

Manners, national character, &c.]---The Kirgusses lead a wandering life, rambling with their flocks and their herds as far as the stepp of Issim, and furnish cattle, lamb-skins, &c. to Russia.† They have excellent mutton, and their lamb is so exquisite, that it is sent from Orenburg to Petersburg, for the tables of the palace. The Kirgusses have the Tartaric features, the flat nose and small eyes, though not oblique like those of the Monguls and the Chinese. They wear large trowsers and pointed boots, with a thin vest instead of a shirt, and commonly two short robes. The head is shaved and covered with a conic bonnet.* The Usbecs are the most industrious of all the Tartars. They live in towns and villages, though many of them reside in tents during the summer. Those of Balk are, as already observed, the most civilized. The native Bucharians are fair, and have the Persian features. They are a peaceable and inoffensive people, and never bear arms.

* The manners of the Kirgusses are amply described by Pallas. Russ. vol. 3, p. 376, &c.

EXTERIOR

PAG. 447 To 448

are MISSING

June, July, and August, the heat is oppressive. The interior of Cochin China has not been explored by Europeans, but it is known to afford both gold and silver. The chief agricultural production is rice; but there is great plenty of different vegetables and tropical fruits. Sugar is also cultivated with success, and purified by an excellent method. The zoology is ample and various. The horses are small, but active: mules and asses abound; and goats are exceedingly numerous. Among the wild animals, are abundance of elephants, tigers, and monkies.* The edible birds' nests, formed by a species of swallows from some unknown viscous substance, and esteemed a luxury in China, are chiefly found in this country, although not unknown in several of the Oriental islands. The coasts of Cochin China have been visited and described by several navigators. They abound with havens; and the canoes and junks are numerous. The harbour, called Turon by the Europeans, is spacious and commodious. About forty miles to the north of this inlet, is the capital city of Cochin China, named Hue-fo, which was reported to have a garrison of 30,000 men, armed with match-locks, sabres, and pikes, besides several elephants of war. The trade of this country is considerable, and chiefly in the hands of the Portugueze of Macao. The manufactures are not important, but they shew some skill in those of iron and earthern ware; the latter of which, in particular, is extremely neat. This country is supposed to have derived its population from China, and even to have anciently been, together with Tonquin, a portion of that vast empire. The Cochin Chinese appear to have made considerable progress in civilization. The su-

* Pennant's Outlines of the Globe, vol. 3, p. 65.

perior ranks are clothed in silk, and display the politeness of Chinese manners. The houses are generally constructed of bamboo, thatched with rice straw or rushes, and stand in groves of plantains, limes, orange, and cocoa trees.* Siampa, a small maritime tract, producing cotton, indigo, &c. is represented as governed by a king, who is tributary to Cochin China. The inhabitants are said to be large, muscular, and well made, with flattish noses and long black hair.†

3. CAMBODIA, OR CAMBOGE.

THIS kingdom, which lies to the westward of Cochin China, is enclosed on the east and the west by mountains, and fertilized by the great river Makon, which pervades the interior, and begins to inundate the country in June. Near its mouth, it is full of low islands and sand banks, which impede the navigation; and there is no port nor town. The country is fertile in rice, and abundant in animal food. It also affords great plenty of ivory, and several valuable kinds of wood; but the peculiar product is the substance called gamboge, or, more properly, Camboge gum, which yields a fine yellow tint. The capital, called Cambodia, consists only of one street, with a temple. The country is thinly peopled; many of the inhabitants are Chinese, Malays, and Japanese settlers.

* This sketch of Cochin China is taken from Sir George Staunton's Account of the Embassy to China, vol. 1, ch. 8.

† Pennant's Outlines, vol 3, p. 51. Pennant's authorities, however are here antiquated and obscure.

4. LAOS.

This kingdom, from its inland situation, and the forests and deserts with which it is almost surrounded, is less known than any other state of Exterior India; and it is difficult to find any recent materials for elucidating its geography. Among its products are reckoned abandance of rice, the best Benjoin and Lacca, excellent musk, gold, silver, and copper, rubies and pearls, with emeralds of a large size. In regard to animal food, buffaloes abound; and venison is said to be plentiful in the markets. Kœmpfer represents it as a powerful state in his time, and says that Landjam and Tsiamaja were the principal towns.* Du Halde describes it, in his time, as tributary to Ava. He says, that the capital was called by the Chinese, Mohang Long, that it was of considerable extent, enclosed only with a pallisade, and standing on both sides of a river; that a mine of rubies was near the city, and some others of gold, silver, and copper, at the distance of five days' journey.† But it is time to close this imperfect description, for which no better basis can be found than obscure, confused, and antiquated authorities. So defective is the geography of several regions of the globe, notwithstanding the industry of modern investigation, and the number of recent discoveries. Several parts of Exterior India are no better known than they were above a century ago.

* Kœmpfer, vol. 1, p. 40, &c.

† Du Halde, vol. 1, p. 125.

5. MALACCA, OR MALAYA.

AFTER this superficial, and necessarily imperfect sketch of the smaller kingdoms of Exterior India; the clearest and most succinct geographical arrangement seems to point out the appended peninsula of Malacca as the next object of description, before we proceed to the more important monarchies of Siam and the Birman empire, and from them to Hindostan.

Situation, extent, boundaries.]---The northern boundaries of what may be properly called Malacca, are not strictly defined; but it may, without considerable error, be considered as extending from 1°, 30′, to about 9°, 40, north latitude, in a direction nearly from south-south-east to north-north-west; being about 570 English miles in length, by about 115 or 120 in medial breadth.* Except on the north, it is surrounded on all sides by the sea, and consequently forms a peninsula. Notwithstanding its contracted breadth, the interior has scarcely been explored by any European: little can therefore be said of the general aspect of the country. It appears, however, that the inland parts are mostly covered with extensive aboriginal forests. A late writer represents the soil as extremely rich, clothed with a most luxuriant vegetation, and spontaneously abounding in the choicest productions, but almost destitute of culture.† In the commencement of the last century, Malacca was described as divided into two kingdoms: that of Patani, in the north; and

* Arrowsmith's Map. The medial breadth of 150 miles, as given by Pinkerton, seems far greater than can be measured from the best delineations. Geog. vol. 2, p. 201.

† Le Poivre, ap. Pennant's Outlines of the Globe, vol. 3, p. 33.

that of Yohor, or Yor, in the south. The town of Patani was built of wood and reeds, but the mosque of brick. The inhabitants were Mahomedans, and tributary to Siam; but the trade was conducted by the Chinese and the Portugueze settlers. The capital of the southern kingdom of Yahor was Batusaber, distant about six leagues from the sea, in a marshy situation; so that the houses were obliged to be raised about eight feet from the ground. All the lands belonged to the king, and were assigned to any subjects that demanded them to cultivate; but the Malays were so indolent, that the country was chiefly left to the wild luxuriance of nature. In the northern kingdom of Patani, oxen and buffaloes were used in cultivating the ground; and the chief agricultural product was rice. According to Mandeslo, from whom this account is derived, there are continual rains in the peninsula, with a north-east wind, during the months of November, December, and January. The country seems to have abounded with cattle, as the Portugueze are said to have purchased annually no fewer than 1,500 from the kingdom of Patani, for their settlement of Malacca. Game was plentiful; and the forests swarmed with elephants, tigers, wild boars, and monkies. The mineralogy of the peninsula seems to be only a barren subject. Some gold is said to be found in the river which runs near the city of Malacca;* but the metal for which the country is chiefly noted, is tin, a circumstance which strongly contradicts the supposition of its being the golden Chersonese of the ancients, an opinion which, for some time, was current.

Cities and towns.]---The capitals of the two native

* Pennant's View of Hindostan, vol. 3, p. 30.

 kingdoms

kingdoms of the peninsula have already been mentioned. The only town of note now known, is Malacca, This city, situated in the southern part of the peninsula, in 2°, 15′ N. Lat. and 102°, 5′ E. Long. had already become a great mart of Oriental traffic, before the arrival of the Portugueze in that quarter of the globe.* In 1520, it was taken by the celebrated Albuquerque, and esteemed one of the most important of his conquests. It was held by the Portugueze till 1641, when it was seized by the Dutch. The Portugueze settlement extended about fifteen miles round the city, which was of great importance to that nation, on account of its advantageous position as an emporium of Chinese and Indian commerce. The town contained about 3,000, and the suburbs, with the rest of the settlement, about 9,000 inhabitants, of whom, not more than 300 were native Portugueze, the rest being Malays, many of whom were reckoned among the most opulent merchants of the East. Through the jealousy of the Dutch in every thing relative to their Oriental possessions, the present state of this city is very imperfectly known. Its wealth and importance however, are probably declined since Batavia has become the focus of their commerce and power in this quarter of the globe.

Islands.]—At some distance from the coast of the peninsula, are the islands of Andaman and Nicobar. The greater Andaman is about 140 English miles in length, but not more than twenty in its greatest breadth, indented with deep bays, forming excellent harbours, and intersected by vast inlets and creeks, one of which, navigable for small vessels, passes quite

* Hamilton Moore's Tables.

through

through the isle.* The soil is described as a black mould; but the greatest part of the island is covered with aboriginal forests, producing ebony and other valuable woods. The only quadrupeds are wild hogs, monkies, and rats. The natives, who are about 2,000 in number, are woolly-headed negroes, resembling those of Africa; and it is difficult to account for their origin, which has given rise to various conjectures. They are extremely brutal, insidious, and ferocious, and have not the least tincture of civilization A British settlement has been recently formed on this island, and some convicts sent thither from Bengal. The Nicobar islands are three in number, the largest of which is not more than fifteen miles in circumference.† The productions are in general, similar to those of the Andamans, and the neighbouring peninsula: the most remarkable is an excellent kind of bread-fruit, but different from that of Otaheite. This fruit is said to weigh from twenty to thirty pounds; and some plants have been introduced into the botanical garden of the East India Company near Calcutta. The only animals are swine and dogs. The people are of a copper colour with Tartaric features.

History.] The history of the Malay nation is enveloped in mysterious obscurity. The peninsula, as already hinted, has been considered as known to the ancients under the name of the Golden Chersonese. But without laying any stress on its mineralogical poverty, little calculated to procure it this splendid appellation, an eminent geographical critic has proved, by a multiplicity of well founded arguments, that not

† For a description of this island, See Col. Symes's Embassy to Ava. vol. 1, ch. 1.

* For these isles, See Asiatic Researches, vol. 3. p. 149, vol. 4. p. 385.

Malacca

Malacca, but Pegu, now a province of the Birman empire, is the Golden Chersonese of the Greeks.* This peninsula indeed, seems to have been totally unknown to Ptolemy, and even to have escaped the knowledge of Marco Polo the famous Venetian traveller of the thirteenth century. The Portugueze are regarded as the first discoverers; and when they reached the peninsula in 1509, they found it subject to Mahmood a Mahomedan prince. The conquest of Malacca is a brilliant event in the history of Albuquerque and of Portugal; but it developes no important feature in that of the Malay nation. The emigrations and conquests of the Malays, as well as their conversion to Mahomedanism, are events of which no records are known to be extant, and for which no dates can be assigned. But they had all taken place previous to the Portugueze discoveries, and since that period the Malayan history presents nothing of importance.

After exhibiting a view of the numerous isles of the Indian Archipelago, and of those that are scattered through the immense extent of the Pacific Ocean, all of which have almost to a certainty been conquered and colonized by the Malays, it will be requisite to add some further remarks on the mysterious history of this extraordinary people, for the origin, as well as the adventures of which, it is difficult to account†.

Religion.]—The Malays profess Mahomedanism; but seem in general to have little regard for religion, and still less for morality.

Government.]—Their government is completely feudal:

* Gosselin, Geographie des Grecs. Analys. p. 139.

† It is difficult to say whether the Malays be of Hindoo or Mongalian extraction. If their language be of a Sanscrit origin, as said in Asiatic Researches, vol. 4. p. 217, they appear to have come from Hindostan.

feudal: their sultans have very little command over their great vassals, who often experience the same disobedience from their inferiors. There are numbers of independent adventurers, who sell their services to the best bidder; but the great mass of the nation is in a state of perpetual servitude to their lords.* The Malay constitution displays all the insubordination, the anarchy and oppression of the feudal system of Europe in the worst times of its influence.

Army, navy, revenues.]—There seems to be no regular army or navy in the peninsula, but there are bands of private adventurers, and numbers of piratical vessels belonging to most of the Malay colonies. Those of Celebes or Macassar are the most noted for their depredations.† Revenue is an article of which nothing can be said.

Commerce and manufactures.]—The commerce of the peninsula is chiefly in the hands of the Dutch: that of the different Malay islands will be noted under the proper heads. The same will be observed in regard to their manufactures: those of the peninsula are little known or noted. It may be observed that the Malays chiefly excel in the fabrication of daggers, and other destructive weapons. Nothing can be said of the population, or the political importance of a nation so unconnected, and so extensively scattered; and the peninsula appears to be wholly under the control of the Dutch, who indeed have a great influence in many of the Malay islands.

Language.]—Although the Malays may be reckoned among the most ferocious people on the face of the globe, their language is singularly sweet and harmo-

* Le Poivre apud Pennant ubi supra.

† See Description of Celebes.

nious

nious, from the melody of frequent vowels and liquids, and on that account has been called the Italian of the East. The following specimen furnished by Mr. Marsden, will give an idea of its flowing and harmonious sounds.

Apo goono passang palceto
Callo tecdah dangan soomboonia ?

What signifies attempting to light a lamp if the wick be wanting ?

The Malays use the Arabic character; and their language has a great number of Arabic words; but it is said be of Sanscrit derivation.* Notwithstanding however, the praises bestowed on their language, little is said concerning their literature.

Persons, manners, customs, &c.]—The Malays are in general below the middle stature, but well made:† their limbs are well shaped, but small, particularly at the wrists and the ancles. Their eyes are large, the nose is generally somewhat flat; but whether this be the effect of art or of nature, is uncertain. Their complexion is tawney or olive, their hair long, black, and shining. Those who are above the rank of slaves always go armed, and would think it a disgrace to be seen abroad, without their poignards or daggers. Their dress is quite different from that of the other Asiatics: instead of the long flowing robes, the clothing of the Malays is exactly adapted to their shapes, and trimmed with a multitude of buttons, which fasten them close to their bodies in every part.

National Character.]—The Malays are of a restless

* Asiatic Researches, ubi supra.

† The natives of the Friendly Isles, Otaheite, the Marquesas, and other islands of the Pacific Ocean, who are evidently of Malay origin, are tall and stout. La Peyrouse Voyages, and Cooke's Voyages, passim.

dsiposition,

disposition, greatly addicted to navigation, war, plunder, and emigration; and remarkably fond of romantic adventures and desperate enterprises. Being always employed in pillaging their neighbours, or engaged in wars among themselves, their lives are a perpetual round of agitation and tumult. A desperate ferocity is the well known characteristic of the nation. Malay barks, not carrying above thirty men, have been known to attack, by surprize, European vessels of thirty or forty guns, and to obtain possession of them, by suddenly boarding and massacring the greatest part of the crew with their poignards.* The judicious reader will observe, that these horrid characteristics of national ferocity and treachery are taken from the conduct of their chiefs, their navigators and adventurers, who are robbers and pirates by profession, and with whom the Europeans are chiefly acquainted. The poor peasantry in the interior parts of their colonies, who are held in a state of servitude, are probably, of a milder and more inoffensive disposition; and the natives of many of the Malay islands in the Pacific Ocean, display a character sufficiently friendly and amiable.† All estimates of national character admit of various distinctions and modifications.

6. SIAM.

Situation, extent, boundaries, &c.] The boundaries of Siam, like those of the other states of Exterior India, and indeed of most Oriental countries, are not precisely ascertained; but this kingdom may, without any considerable error be considered as extending from

* Le Poivre apud Pennant, ubi supra.

† See the voyages of Bourgainville, Cooke, La Peyrouse, and other navigators. Passim. And also Keate's account of the Pelew Islands.

about

about 10° or 11° to about 19° N. Lat. a length of 500 or 550 English miles, on a breadth varying from 60 to about 220 miles. On the west, a chain of mountains divides it from Pegu, now a province of the Birman empire.* On the south, the limits are fixed by the ocean, and on the east, they are marked by a chain of mountains, which separate Siam from Laos and Cambodia. The northern boundaries towards the Birman dominions, are unknown, and by reason of frequent wars, are subject to continual variations.

Face of the country.]—Siam consists of an extensive vale, pervaded by a large river, and inclosed on each side by a ridge of lofty mountains. The soil of the flat country is extremely rich, being a deposition of mud, accumulating from early ages by annual inundations. This country in its chief geographical features, greatly resembles Egypt, but on a wider scale. Towards the mountains are vast primæval forests, displaying a rich and picturesque vegetation.

Mountains.]—The mountains have not been explored nor distinguished by particular names. The general direction of the ranges is from north to south.

Rivers.]—The Meinam, which pervades this country is a deep and rapid river;† and its water though muddy is pleasant and wholesome.‡ The inundations commence in September, and in December the water begins to sink to its former level. The inundations are greater in the centre of the country, than nearer the coasts, the causes being gradually exhausted. The source of this celebrated Oriental river is unknown; but the inhabitants suppose that it issues from the same

* Arrowsmith's map. † Kœmpfer, vol. 1. p. 66.

‡ In this the Meinam resembles the Nile. See artic. Egypt on the authority of Antes.

mountains

mountains as the Ganges, a conjecture which is not improbable. Towards the mouth of the Meinam, the country consists of wild and intricate wildernesses, resembling the Sunderbunds of the Gangetic Delta.

Mineralogy.]---Siam is said to afford gold, silver, tin and copper. The mines chiefly wrought, however, appear to have been those of lead and tin.* All the tin, except that of the isle of Yankseylon, was the royal prerogative. This island is said to have exported annually about 500 tons of that metal; but perhaps it is now fallen under the power of the Birmans. From the ancient pits which remain, Loubere supposes that the Siamese mines had formerly been more assiduously wrought. In his time, however, although Europeans were employed, no mines of gold or silver could be found that would pay the expences of working. From the great quantity of gold employed in their temples in gilding the idols, the columns, the ceiling, &c. it might be presumed that this metal had once been more plentiful.

Soil and climate.]---The soil of the great vale of Siam, which comprises the whole of the cultivated country, is, as already observed, extremely rich, and the climate being hot, greatly promotes its fertility. The Siamese winter, which consists only of the two months of December and January, is nearly as warm as the summers in France.† February, March, and April, constitute the little, and the seven months, the great Siamese summer. The winter is dry, and the wind almost constantly blows from the north: the

* Recent information adds iron and loadstone, with several precious stones, as sapphires, emeralds, and agates, as also chrystals and marble. Dalrymple's Oriental Repository, p. 118.

† Loubere, tom. 1.

summer

summer is moist, and the rains fall in great abundance as in other tropical countries.

Vegetable productions.]--The combination of heat and moisture, with a soil extremely rich, and fertilized by annual inundations, must naturally produce a luxuriant vegetation. The chief agricultural production is rice, which is here of an excellent quality. Peas, and other vegetables, also abound; and wheat is produced in grounds not exposed to the inundations; but the Siamese are represented as far from being industrious, and their agriculture does not appear to extend far from the banks of the river and its branches. Towards the mountains are forests of vast extent, which produce many valuable species of wood, among which the sandal, the sapan, and the aguallo, are enumerated.*

Animal productions.]---The domestic zoology of Siam appears to be unimportant. Horses are little known or used: in the latter part of the seventeenth century, however, the king had a few ill-mounted cavalry. The chief animals are the elephant, the buffalo, and the deer. The elephants of Siam are remarked for their sagacity and beauty, as well as their size. Those of a white colour are objects of a peculiar veneration, as the Siamese suppose them to be animated by the souls of deceased princes. Wild boars, tigers, monkies, &c. are numerous.

Natural curiosities.]—The banks of the Meinam, which waters the great Siamese vale, exhibit a singular and beautiful phœnomenon, the trees being often illuminated in the night with swarms of fireflies, shining with admirable brilliancy, and making a most picturesque and striking appearance. No men-

* Dalrymple's Oriental Repository, p. 118, According to this collection, Siam produces great quantities of cotton.

tion

tion is made of any remarkable monuments of antiquity.

Chief cities.]—The capital has been commonly called by the Europeans Siam, but Yuthia appears to be the native name. This city is situated in an island formed by the Meinam. In Loubere's time it was of great extent, but not more than a sixth part was inhabited. The approach on the eastern side was by a causey, which afforded the only access by land. On the northern side was the royal palace, which was extensive, but rather gaudy than magnificent. In 1690, many of the houses, and some of the bridges, were of stone; and Kœmpfer vaguely describes the magnificence of the temples. A great part of this Oriental metropolis was inhabited by foreigners; and the Chinese, the Japanese, the Cochin Chinese, the Malays, and the Portugueze, had their distinct quarters. Kœmpfer's account gives no contemptible idea of its temples, pyramids, and other structures.* Such was the state of this city about the commencement of the last century; but Siam has, since that period, been the theatre of destructive wars and violent revolutions; so that in the want of recent accounts, nothing is known of its present state. Several other towns are mentioned by Loubere, and marked in the map by D'Anville; but none of them were of any great magnitude or importance.

History.]—The original population of Siam cannot be traced with any degree of probability, until the different Oriental languages be more fully investigated. The Siamese are generally supposed to be the Sinæ of Ptolemy, although others imagine that these

* Kœmpfer's Voy. au Japan, vol. 1, p. 42, &c.

Sinæ

Sinæ were no other than the Chinese. Without attempting the solution of this intricate and useless question, which, from the confusion of names, and the want of circumstantial information among the ancients, must ever remain obscure, it suffices to remark, that the Siamese history, like that of the other Oriental nations, is imperfect and fabulous; so that until the time of the Portugueze discoveries, it is wholly unworthy of attention, and may be regarded as unknown. Since that period, wars with Pegu, and frequent usurpations of the throne, which are common features in all Asiatic histories, are the principal events. The war with Pegu, in 1568, on the subject of two white elephants, which the Siamese refused to surrender, was exceedingly bloody, and terminated in rendering Siam tributary to the Peguese monarch. About the year 1620, this kingdom threw off the yoke of Pegu, and recovered its independence. But the most curious circumstances in the Siamese history, are the singular advancement, the deep designs, the extensive views, and the final catastrophe of Phaleon, a Greek adventurer. This man being highly favored by the king of Siam, had formed the most ambitious designs, and is said to have even aspired to royalty. In order to facilitate the execution of his projects, he opened, in 1680, an intercourse with France. In consequence of this arrangement, the French began to consider Siam as an object of considerable political importance, as a convenient mart of Indian commerce, and as a promising source of opulence. But in 1689, the illusion was dissipated. The designs of Phaleon being discovered, he was punished by decapitation, and the French connection immediately ceased. From that period Europe had scarcely any information relative to the

the events which took place in Siam, until the publication of Col. Symes's account of the embassy to Ava. From this valuable and interesting work, it appears that this kingdom has, since the middle of the last century, been frequently engaged in bloody contests with the Birmans.

In 1760, the capital was besieged by that people; but the death of their emperor caused them to desist from their enterprise. About six years afterwards it was again besieged, and taken by the same enemy, and the kingdom became tributary. But in 1771, the Siamese monarch threw off the yoke, recommenced the war, and defeated the Birmans. From that period the contests between these two Oriental powers have been marked with alternate success and defeat. About the year 1785, the Birman emperor took the field with an army of 30,000 men, and a train of artillery, consisting of twenty field pieces, but was defeated by the king of Siam, who being in his turn unsuccessful in other quarters, a peace was concluded in 1793. These contests, however, have, on the whole, been to the disadvantage of Siam, which, although it still retains a considerable portion of its ancient importance, has lost several of its northern provinces, with some of its western maritime towns.*

Religion.]---The religion of the Siamese is a branch of that of the Hindoos; and the metempsichosis is an essential part of its doctrines. The Vinac, which appears to be the most esteemed book, prohibits murder, theft, uncleanness, lying, and the use of any intoxicating liquor. These are the five general precepts of morality: but there is also a more minute code, chiefly composed for the use of persons dedicated to religion.

* Colonel Symes's Embassy to Ava, vol 1.

 The

The priests and monks of Siam, are, according to Loubere, named Tchaoucou, in the native language; but Kœmpfer gives them other Siamese names. The former, however, throughout his whole work, calls them Talapoins, a name of uncertain origin, but which the European writers have, from his authority, universally adopted.

Government.]—The succession to the crown is hereditary in the male line; but, as in other Oriental countries, usurpations are not unfrequent. The government is despotic, and the sovereign is revered with honours almost divine. He sometimes consults the superior Talapoins, and the governors of the provinces; but there is no constitutional control on his absolute will. The laws are represented by all writers as extremely severe, the most trifling offences being punished by death, or mutilation.

Army, navy, revenue.]—The military force of Siam is a subject, relative to which no recent information exists. In the time of Loubere, there was no standing army, but a few royal guards. But as every man is liable to military service, it is difficult to compute the number that might occasionally be raised. Mandeslo supposed, that 60,000 men, with about 3000 or 4000 elephants, might be mustered, in case of emergency. The Siamese navy is composed of a great number of war boats, some of which are richly decorated. The revenue is a subject of which nothing can be said, as the want of appropriate documents precluded every attempt of computation or conjecture to estimate its amount.

Commerce.]—This kingdom, or, at least, Yuttria, the capital, appears to have once had a considerable trade. The exports were gold, jewels, benjoin, lacca, tin, lead,

lead, &c. with abundance of deer-skins, of which more than 150,000 were annually purchased by the Japanese: the imports consisted chiefly of cloths from Hindostan, and various articles from China. The king was the principal merchant, and had factors in all the neighbouring countries. The royal monopoly comprized the trade in tin, ivory, saltpetre, arrack, cotton, cloths, and skins, sold to the Dutch. Such was the trade of Siam about the commencement of the last century; but since that time it has probably declined.

Manufactures.]—The Siamese manufactures were never important. They excel in those of gold; but have little skill in working iron or steel. The people, although ingenious, are rendered indolent by the ruinous despotism of the government, which crushes every species of industry. The service of six months, which is due by every subject to the sovereign, must be regarded as an invincible obstacle to improvement, and productive of universal languor among the people.

Population.]—Of the population of this kingdom we have no recent estimate; and it can only be observed, that Loubere, 100 years ago, represents it as amounting to no more than 1,900,000, by an actual enumeration.

Political importance and relations.]—The Birman empire is the only Oriental power that Siam has to fear; and the other kingdoms of Exterior India are her natural allies. They are all equally threatened by the aggrandisement of the Birmans; but the Orientals pay little regard to the balance of power.

Language.]---The Siamese language has not been completely investigated. The words are chiefly monosyllables, like Chinese. There appears to be a considerable chaunt in the enunciation; and the idioms

are said to be so remote from those of Europe, as to render any translation extremely difficult.

Literature, science, and education.]—The literature of Siam holds no contemptible rank in the Oriental scale. History, law, morality, poetry, and mythological fables, constitute its chief departments. The Siamese seem not to have made any great progress in the sciences; but some of their miniature paintings are no contemptible specimens of art. Their modes of education are amply described by Loubere. At the age of seven or eight years, the children are commonly placed in the monasteries of the Talapoins, where they are instructed in reading, writing, and accompts, in order to qualify them for the mercantile profession, as well as in the various branches of literature.

Persons, manners, customs, &c.]---The Siamese are of a smallish stature, but well made. Their distinguishing features are hollow cheeks, with high cheek bones, a narrow forehead and chin, the latter contracting almost to a point; eyes small and dull, that part which, among most other nations, is white, being often entirely yellow; the mouth commonly large, and the lips thick and pale, with teeth blackened by art. Their complexion is a coarse brown mixed with red. The dress of the Siamese is extremely slight, that of the rich consisting only of a muslin shirt, with wide sleeves, loose drawers, and a high conic cap: a mantle is commonly added in winter. The women are covered with a scarf instead of the shirt, and wear a petticoat of painted calico. The Siamese have a multitude of theatrical amusements, the subjects of which are commonly furnished by their mythology, or the traditionary stories of their ancient heroes. One of their dra-

mas

mas requires not less than three days for its representation. They have also pantomimes, with music and dancing. Besides these are races of oxen and of boats, combats of elephants, cock-fightings, tumbling, wrestling, rope-dancing, religious processions, illuminations, and grand exhibitions of fire-works. The Siamese are temperate in diet, their common nourishment being rice and fish. They also eat rats, lizards, and various kinds of insects; but butter and cheese are unknown; and both beef and mutton are very scarce and bad. Their houses are small, constructed of bamboos, and stand upon pillars in order to secure them against the inundations so common in this country. According to Loubere, even the palaces were of timber, never exceeding the height of one story, almost destitute of ornaments, and scarcely surpassing the common habitations, except in occupying a more extensive space.* The fair sex are generally married at an early age, being past parturition at forty. Polygamy is allowed, but one of the wives is supreme. The funerals of the rich Siamese are pompous. A solemn procession takes place, accompanied by the Talapoins, singing hymns; after which, the corpse being placed in a varnished coffin, is burned on a funeral pile, erected near some temple; and the spectacle is often rendered more magnificent by the addition of theatrical exhibitions. The sepulchral monuments are of a pyramidal form, and those of the kings are large and lofty. The poor are buried with little ceremony.

National character.]---The Siamese shew indications

* Loubere and Kœmpfer, however, do not perfectly agree in their representations; but the former, in his longer residence, had seen more of the country.

of an excellent genius, but their ingenuity is at least equalled by their indolence. The men are extremely addicted to gaming, and leave, in a great measure, to the women, the employments of industry.*

* The whole of this article of Siam is taken from Loubere and Kœmpfer, who visited this country more than a century ago; but Oriental ideas and manners seldom change.

THE

THE BIRMAN EMPIRE;

COMPRISING THE ANCIENT KINGDOMS OF PEGU AND AVA.

THIS new empire, which, previous to the late embassy, was almost unknown, has been developed to the world by Colonel Symes, in his interesting narrative.* According to his description, it extends from 9° to 26° north latitude, and from 92° to 107° east longitude, or about 1,020 geographical miles in length from north to south, and about 860 geographical miles in breadth from east to west.† Its breadth, however, is variable, and even becomes inconsiderable on the peninsula.

Boundaries.]---The limits of the Birman empire, especially on the south and the east, cannot be ascertained with precision. Towards the north, it is bounded by China, Thibet, and mountains which divide it from Asam, a country little known. On the west, a chain of mountains, and the little river Naaf, separate it

* Of the former kingdoms of Pegu and Ava, there are some, but only few descriptions; and all of them are imperfect and antiquated. Colonel Symes's account of the embassy to Ava, affords the only authentic and recent information relating to this empire.

† This breadth is calculated on the middle latitude of seventeen degrees, and varies greatly from Colonel Symes's statement. It is not, indeed, clear, whether he speaks of the latitudinal and longitudinal limits inclusively, or exclusively, but the difference here would make only about 115 miles.

from

from the British dominions in Bengal; and in proceeding southward, the limit is continued along the sea coast.

Face of the country.]---Except the swampy delta of the Irrawady, intersected by the various branches of that river, the face of the country is finely diversified with hills and dales, ranges of mountains, extensive forests, and fertile plains, forming a rich and luxuriant landscape.

Mountains.]—The highest mountains are most probably on the borders of Thibet. The other ranges are delineated as running, in general, from north to south; among which, those of Arracan seem to be the best known.

Rivers.]—The chief river of the Birman empire, is the Irrawady, which rising, most probably, in Thibet, or China, passes by Ummerapoora, the new capital, and falls into the sea by several mouths.* Its breadth varies from one to two, three, and even four or five miles; and it is interspersed with numerous islands.† This noble river intersects the Birman dominions, in a direction nearly from north to south. Like the Nile and the Ganges, inundating the plains, it dispenses fertility and abundance, while it affords a commodious and extensive inland navigation quite through the country to the borders of China.‡ The river of Pegu, which was supposed to come from China, is now said

* Pinkerton supposes the Irrawady to be the Kempoo of Thibet, vol. 2, p. 194. But M. Rennel seems positive, that it is the Nou Kiang of China, Mem. p. 296, 297. Dr. Buchanan derives at least the eastern branch of the Irrawady from the frontiers of China, Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 2, p. 414.

† For the breadth of the Irrawady in different parts of its course, see Col. Symes's Embassy to Ava, vol. 2, p. 155, 208, 209, 230, 256.

‡ Col. Symes, vol. 2, p. 377.

to

to rise only about forty miles beyond the city; and the Chinese rivers, which were considered as its heads, are supposed to be those of the great river of Siam.* But the rivers of India, extra Gangem, are a subject on which geographers could never yet agree. The ranges of mountains, the lakes, and other grand features of nature, also remain unexplored; and, in fine, the geography of these countries, like that of the rest of Exterior India, and, indeed, of most of the Oriental regions, is so defective, that, until more accurate knowledge can be obtained, any attempt at particular delineation, would be an imposition on the reader.†

Mineralogy.]—The mineralogy of the Birman empire is rich, abundant, and various. According to Colonel Symes's account, gold is plentiful. It is found in the sands of the rivers, and there are mines of gold and silver near the frontiers of China. The rubies of Pegu are particularly celebrated, being next to the diamond in value, and almost as peculiar to that country as the latter to Hindostan. Sapphires, amethysts, garnets, and beautiful chrysolites, are numbered among the treasures of the Birman mineralogy. Rubies and sapphires are found in the north-west parts of the empire; but the richest mines are within about thirty miles to the north of Ummerapoora, the new capital. Mines of gold, silver, rubies, and sapphires, are at present open on the mountain of Wooboloo-taun, near the river Keen Duem, which being supposed to rise on the borders of Asam, afterwards joins the Irrawady. Among the inferior, but more useful metals and mi-

* Dr. Buchanan, ap. Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 2, p. 414, 415.

† Dr. Buchanan speaks with uncertainty on the subject of the Birman rivers, although his ideas are judiciously formed. Col. Symes, vol. 2, p. 413.

nerals

nerals of this region, may be noted abundance of tin, iron, and lead.* There are also sulphur, arsenic, and antimony, with abundance of amber, which is dug up in large quantities near the banks of the Irrawady, and is extremely pure and pellucid. Jasper and loadstone, also, are plentiful; and within a few miles of the new metropolis, there are quarries of marble which equals the finest in Italy.

Soil.]—" The soil of the southern provinces of the Birman empire is remarkably fertile, and produces as luxuriant crops of rice as are to be found in the finest parts of Bengal. Farther northward, the country becomes irregular and mountainous; but the plains and valleys, particularly near the river, are exceedingly fruitful; they yield good wheat, and the various kinds of grain which grow in Hindostan; as likewise legumes, and most of the esculent vegetables. Sugar canes, tobacco of a superior quality, indigo, cotton, and the different tropical fruits in perfection, are all indigenous products of this favored land."†

Climate.]—The climate of a country extending through 17° of latitude, must afford some variety, and a still greater difference must be produced by topographical circumstances. The swampy levels towards the mouth of the Irrawady, which resemble the lower parts of Bengal, must produce an atmosphere extremely different from that of the mountainous provinces bordering on Thibet. In general, however, the climate must be considered as similar to that of Hindostan;

* For the mineralogy of the Birman empire, see Col. Symes's Embassy, p. 275.

† Col. Symes's Account of the Embassy to Ava, vol. 2, p. 372, &c.

but

but the healthful and vigorous appearance of the people indicates a greater degree of salubrity.*

Vegetable productions.]—The chief vegetable productions, as well as the nature of the soil, are enumerated in the foregoing extract from Colonel Symes's excellent work. To these, however, might be added numerous drugs used in medicine or manufactures, besides a countless variety, and inexhaustible abundance of indigenous fruits; most of which, indeed, are common to all the countries of Exterior India, as well as to those of Hindostan. The vine grows wild in many of the forests; but from the excess of heat and moisture, as also from want of culture, its fruit is of an inferior nature. It would be tedious, and, indeed, from want of more accurate knowledge, impossible, to enumerate the various kinds of trees, which rear their heads in proud magnificence. Among these, however, must be noticed the teak, which, although rare in Hindostan, and not mentioned in any of our accounts of Siam, constitutes the principal glory of the Birman forests.† Its wood is at least equal, if not superior to the British oak, as a material for ship-building; for besides being as easy to work, it is said to be more durable. This valuable timber abounds in most of the forests of the Birman empire, both to the north of Ummerapoora, and in the southern provinces. Colonel Symes observes, that without the timber trade to

* Col. Symes speaks in the strongest terms of the salubrity of the Birman dominions. Embassy to Ava, p. 371, &c.

† On the banks of the Godavery, in the interior of the Deccan, there are extensive forests of teak. M. Rennel's Mem. The exportation, however, is difficult; and both Calcutta and Madras are wholly supplied with this article from the Birman forests. Col. Symes, vol. 3, p. 270.

Pegu,

Pegu, the British marine in India could exist only on a contracted scale. He estimates the shipping at Calcutta at 40,000 tons; and observes, as a proof of its importance, that during the scarcity of the year 1795, when Great Britain was menaced with the horrors of famine, 14,000 tons of shipping, mostly India-built, freighted with rice, brought a seasonable supply to the city of London, and greatly reduced the price of that article*. The indigenous timber of Bengal is found to be unserviceable; but some of the finest merchant ships ever seen in the Thames, have been built at Calcutta of teak wood, from the forests of Pegu.'

Zoology.]—The zoology, as well as the vegetation and climate, in general, corresponds with that of Hindostan. The horses are small, but spirited. Elephants and tigers abound chiefly in Pegu. There are many buffaloes; but the Birmans abstain from all animal food except game. Here are several species of volatiles, and a wild fowl, called the henza, has, like the eagle among the Romans, been adopted as the symbol of the empire.

Natural curiosities and antiquities.] The chorography of the Birman dominions is not sufficiently explored to afford a list of natural curiosities. There are, however, some ancient monuments which merit the attention of the traveller, particularly the dilapidated temples of Ava, the ancient capital. But the most remarkable of all these remains of the arts, and magnificence of former ages, is that extraordinary edifice, the Shomadoo, which constituted the grand ornament of the ancient city of Pegu; and according to tradition, was erected about 500 years before the

* Col. Symes's Embassy, p. 266, &c.

Christian

Christian æra.* This singular structure stands on a double terrace; one side of the lower being 1,391, and of the upper, 684 feet. The building is of brick, octagonal at the base, and spiral at the top, without any cavity or aperture. The summit is crowned with an umbrella of open iron work gilt, fifty-six feet in circumference; and the height of the whole is 361 feet, or 331 feet above the inner terrace.† This massy pile appears to be one of the most superb monuments of the East. "From the upper projection that surrounds the shomadoo, the prospect of the circumjacent country is extensive and picturesque; but it is a prospect of nature in her rudest state: there are few inhabitants, and scarcely any cultivation. The hills of Martaban rise to the eastward, and the Sitang river, winding along the plains, gives an uninterrupted view of its waters. To the north-west, at the distance of about forty miles, are the Galadzet hills, in which the river of Pegu takes its rise; hills, remarkable only for the noxious effects of their atmosphere. In every other direction, the eye looks over a boundless plain, checquered by a wild intermixture of wood and water."‡ The desolating wars between the Birmans and the Peguese, before the latter were finally subjugated, have reduced these once populous districts to an uncultivated waste.

CHIEF CITIES.

Ummerapoora.] Ummerapoora, the new capital of the Birman empire, with its spires, turrets, and lofty

* It must, however, be observed, that Oriental traditions and chronology merit little regard.

† Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 2, p. 62, &c.

‡ Ibid. p. 74.

piasath,

piasath, or obelisk, indicative of the imperial residence, seems to rise, like Venice, out of the waters, being situated between the large river, Irrawady, with its numerous islands on the north-west, and the lake of Tounzemaun on the south-east.* The streets are, for the most part, wide, crossing one another at right angles; the houses are low, built of wood, and covered with tiles.† It appears to be of a very considerable extent, although we have no precise indication of its circuit, or of the number of its inhabitants. The fort is an exact quadrangle, containing public granaries and store-rooms, with a gilded temple at each corner of 100 feet in height, but far inferior to some others in the vicinity of the city. In the centre of the fort is the royal palace, having in front a wide court, beyond which is the lotoo, or hall of audience, supported by seventy-seven pillars, disposed in eleven rows. It appears somewhat extraordinary, that the imperial palace, as well as the whole city, is constructed of wood, when, as already observed, the quarries in the vicinity furnish such excellent marble. The environs of Ummerapoora are picturesque and beautiful.‡ On the opposite side of the lake, is a village ornamented with lofty groves of mango, palmyra, and cocoa trees. The number and singular forms of the boats that are moored in the lake, and the surrounding amphitheatre of lofty hills, conspire to render the scene grand and interesting.§

* Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 1, p. 235, and vol. 2, p. 273, &c.

† Ibid. vol. 3, p. 33.

‡ Ummerapoora is about four miles north-east from Ava. Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 1, p. 235. Dark and rugged mountains rise about eight miles to the south-west. Ibid. 290.

§ Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 1, p. 235, vol. 2, p 272, &c. vol. 3, p. 33.

Ava.

Ava.] Ava, the ancient capital, has sunk into ruin since the recent foundation of Ummerapoora, which is only four miles distant. The best idea of its present state will be collected from the words of Colonel Symes. "The walls are now mouldering into decay, ivy clings to the sides, and bushes suffered to grow at the bottom, undermine the foundation, and have already caused large chasms in the different faces of the fort. The materials of the houses consisting chiefly of wood, had, on the first order for removing, been transported to the new city of Ummerapoora; but the ground, except where it is covered with bushes or rank grass, still retains traces of former buildings and streets. The lines of the royal palace, of the lotoo, or grand council hall, the apartments of the women, and the spot on which the piasath, or imperial spire had stood, were pointed out to us by our guide. Chumps of bamboos, a few plantain trees, and tall thorns, occupy the greater part of the area of this lately flourishing capital. We observed two dwelling houses of brick and mortar, the roofs of which had fallen in: these, our guides said, had belonged to Colars, or foreigners; on entering one we found it inhabited only by bats, which flew in our faces, whilst our sense of smelling was offended by their filth, and by the noisome mildew that hung upon the walls. Numerous temples, on which the Birmans never lay sacrilegious hands, were dilapidating by time. It is impossible to draw a more striking picture of desolation and ruin."*

Pegu.] Pegu, formerly the capital of a kingdom of the same name, is also in ruins, having been razed, in 1757, by Alompra, the founder of the present Birman

* Symes, vol. 2, p. 270.

dynasty.

dynasty. The sacred edifices were spared; but of these, the massy pile of the shomadoo, which constitutes the ornament of the present as it did of the former city, has alone been kept in repair. The old city of Pegu appears to have been a quadrangle, each side measuring about a mile and a half. The wall has been about thirty feet high, and its breadth, at the base, about forty; but constructed only of brick, and cemented with clay.*

Prome.]—Prome is a considerable city, and probably next to the capital in extent and population. Rangoon, the chief port of the Birman empire, is of recent foundation, but supposed to contain 30,000 inhabitants. This town serves as an asylum for insolvent debtors from the different settlements of India, and is crowded with foreigners of desperate fortunes. Here are to be found fugitives from all the countries of the east, and of all complexions. Hindoos, Monguls, Persians, Persees, Armenians, Portugueze, French, and English, all mingle here, and are engaged in different branches of commerce. The members of this discordant multitude enjoy the protection of the government, and unlimited freedom in matters of religion. The Catholics, Mahomedans, &c. perform the rites, and publickly celebrate the festivals of their religion without any molestation from the Birmans, who have no inclination to make proselytes; and in establishing universal liberty of conscience, these tolerant pagans furnish an excellent lesson to many nations that profess Christianity. Rangoon is situated on a branch of the great river, Irrawady; and scarcely any

* Symes, vol. 2, p. 51, 52, 53. Pegu is now re-building by orders of the monarch. Ibid. vol. 2, p. 58. Mr. Wood found the latitude of Pegu to be 17° 40′ north and longitude 96° 11′ 15″ east.

port

port in the world possesses greater advantages for ship building. Teak, the most durable wood that is known, and the best adapted for the construction of ships, is produced in the forests of the Birman empire in inexhaustible abundance. The river is commodious: the shipwrights are excellent workmen; the labourers are robust and vigorous; and the whole assemblage of local circumstances appears calculated to render Rangoon the most flourishing sea port of the eastern world.* Many other cities of considerable note might be mentioned; and the banks of the Irrawady are decorated with numerous towns and villages.

Edifices.]---Besides the Shamadoo, already described, there are several other edifices, as temples, palaces, &c. of singularly fantastic architecture and rich decoration.†

History.]---The Birman dominions were partially known to classical geography. The southern part appears to have been the Golden Chersonesus of the Greeks, described by Ptolemy, and the utmost boundary of ancient knowledge towards the east.‡ The Europeans had no precise ideas of the country, or of the people, before the Portugueze discoveries opened a way to the Oriental regions; but since that period, the Birmahs, or Birmans, have been known as a warlike people, and Ava as the capital of their kingdom; and their recent history displays the origin of a new and

* Col. Symes's description of Rangoon. Embassy, vol. 2, ch. 7.

† See Col. Symes's description of religious edifices in the vicinity of Ummerapoora. He admires, in particular, the immense profusion of gilding. Embassy. vol. 3, p. 107, &c.

‡ Gosselin's Geographie des Grecs, p. 139. This judicious writer founds his arguments on the correspondence of Ptolemy's three rivers with the three principal mouths of the Irrawady, and other characteristic features.

great Asiatic power, preponderant in Exterior India. The Birmans appear to have been formerly subject to the king of Pegu, but having revolted, they made themselves masters of Ava, and at last reduced Pegu to become tributary. The Portugueze, who had formed settlements in those countries, engrossed their trade and influenced their politics, until they were expelled by the Dutch, who obtained establishments in various parts of the Birman territory: the English also had factories at Sirian and Ava. This state of things continued till 1740, when a civil war arose, during which the British factory at Sirian was destroyed. The Peguese, having procured some European aids, gained, in 1750 and 1751, some important victories over the Birmans; and in 1752, Ava was besieged and captured. The Birman king was reduced to captivity; but two of his sons escaped to Siam. The king of Pegu, having completed the conquest of Ava, returned to his own country, leaving one of his brothers to govern the late capital of the Birman kingdom. All wore the aspect of tranquil submission, when there suddenly appeared one of those extraordinary characters, who are destined by Providence to effect revolutions, and change the fate of empires. Alompra, a Birman of low extraction, being chief of a small village, was continued in that office by the conquerors. This man, with about 100 devoted followers, determined to liberate their country, took the field, defeated several bands of Peguese, and in 1753, made himself master of Ava. At last, Binga Delli, king of Pegu, advanced in person against the Birman patriot. The war was carried on, not only by land, but by fleets of boats on the great river Irrawady. These war-boats, which are formed out of the solid trunk of the teak-tree, are

from

from 80 to 100 feet in length, but seldom exceed eight feet in breadth. They carry from fifty to sixty rowers, each provided with a sword and lance, with about thirty soldiers armed with muskets, and a piece of cannon mounted on the prow. The attack is impetuous, and is chiefly conducted by grappling, so that their naval engagements revive the image of those of classical antiquity. The fleet of Pegu being in one of those close combats totally defeated by that of the Birmans, Alompra founded the town of Rangoon, which signifies, "victory achieved." Proceeding in his conquests, he took Sirian in 1756; and in the month of January in the following year, he invested the capital city of Pegu, which, after a siege of about three months, was taken and razed to the ground, the sacred edifices alone being spared. Alompra soon after subdued the whole kingdom, to the borders of Siam. Being resolved, in the next place, to chastise the Siamese, who had supported his enemies, he dispatched a fleet against the sea-port of Merghi, which was taken without difficulty, and the conquest was followed by that of Tanaserim. The victor then advanced against the capital of Siam; but two days after the siege had commenced, this warlike founder of the present empire of the Birmans died in the fiftieth year of his age, A. D. 1760, regretted by his people, who venerated him as their deliverer. This great and victorious monarch was succeeded by his son, Namdogee, who reigned only four years, leaving an infant son, whose uncle, Shembuen, second son of the great Alompra, assumed the regency, and afterwards seized the throne. The usurper, in order to divert the national attention, declared war against Siam; and in 1766, two Birman armies having entered that king-

 dom,

dom, defeated the Siamese troops, took the capital, and reduced the whole country to subjection.* These rapid conquests having excited the jealousy of the court of Pekin, a Chinese army was ordered to advance against the Birmans, in order to prevent their further aggrandisement. The expedition, however, proved unsuccessful. The Chinese were totally defeated, and the greatest part of their troops that escaped the sword of the Birmans, were made prisoners. Policy spared the captives, who were encouraged to marry Birman wives, and to settle in the country. In 1771, Siam recovered its independency. The subsequent contests between the Birmans and that kingdom, are concisely related in the sketch of Siamese history. Shembuen died at Ava in 1776, and was succeeded by his son, Changuza. This prince having, by his tyrannical conduct, alienated the affections of his subjects, was, in 1782, slain by conspirators; and Shembuen Minderagee, the present monarch, brother of the deceased Shembuen, and consequently a third son of the great Alompra, ascended the throne of the Birman empire. This monarch removed the seat of government from Ava, and founded the new capital Ummerapoora, which, although of so recent a date, has already become one of the most flourishing cities of Exterior India. In 1783, Minderagee added Arracan to his dominions: the conquest was speedily effected, and the booty highly valued, being an image of burnished brass, the sacred representation of Gandma, the Boodh of the Hindoos.†

* See historical Sketch of Siam.

† Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 1. p. 253. This image is about ten feet high, and is placed in a magnificent temple, which was not finished wh. Col. Symes was at Ummerapoora. Embassy, vol. 3. p. 117.

After

After a renewal of the war with Siam, which was conducted with various success, the treaty of 1793 fixed the boundaries of the Siamese and the Birman dominions. The history of the Birman court exhibits the same picture as most of the Asiatic dynasties: the elder branch of the family was immediately set aside, two sons of the great Alompra having successively dethroned their nephews: every reign has been an usurpation, although the diadem has not been removed from the race of the warlike and victorious founder.*

Religion.]—The Birmans profess the Hindoo religion of the sect of Boodh, which appears to be of greater antiquity, and more widely diffused than that of Brama. Of course they believe in the metempsychosis, supposing that the souls, which, after various transmigrations, are found radically vicious, will be condemned to lasting punishment, while the good will enjoy eternal happiness. They esteem mercy the chief attribute of the Divinity; and the doctrines of Boodh severely censure the sacrifice of cattle, or even the depriving of any being of life.†

Government.]---The government, like all those of Asia, is despotic. There are no hereditary dignities. The tfaloc, or chain, is the badge of nobility; and the number of strings, or divisions, three, six, nine, or twelve, denote the gradations of rank: the monarch alone wears twenty-four. The royal establishment is arranged with punctilious attention; and the business

* This abstract of Birman history is collected from Col. Symes's Embassy to Ava, vol. 1.

† Monasteries are numerous, and the Birman priests live in a state of celibacy; but female convents are suppressed, being considered as injurious to population. Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 2, p. 116 and 122.

of

of government is conducted with great regularity and precision.* In splendor and magnificence, the court of Ummerapoora appears to be the next to that of Pekin, and considerably superior to that of Jeddo.†

Laws.]—The Birman system of jurisprudence is represented by Colonel Symes as replete with good sense, and excelling every other Hindoo code. Trial by ordeal, however, must be considered as one of its absurdities. Many of the Birman laws are too severe, especially that which punishes insolvency with slavery, and, by including relatives sometimes in the bond, causes an innocent wife or daughter to be dragged from a peaceful home, and sold for the purposes of prostitution.‡ The law which punishes the desertion or cowardice of a soldier, by the execution of his wife, children, and parents, whatever may be its tendency to promote fidelity and courage, is almost without a parallel for cruelty.§

Army and navy.]---The standing army is inconsiderable; but as every man is liable to military service, it is impossible to compute the force that may be raised.‖ In time of war, the viceroys levy one recruit from a certain number of houses, which otherwise pay a fine, equivalent to about forty pounds sterling. The family of the soldier are considered as

* The splendor of the court of Ummerapoora appears to surpass that of Japan, and to rank next to that of Pekin. Compare Symes with Thunberg.

† Compare Col. Symes's account of the embassy to Ava, with that which Thunberg has given of the reception of the Dutch at the court of the emperor of Japan.

‡ Col. Symes, vol. 2. p. 128. § Ibid. vol. 2. p. 360.

‖ Grants of land, offices, &c. include the obligation of military service, and consequently the Birman empire exhibits a picture somewhat resembling that of Europe under the feudal system. Col. Symes's Embassy to Ava, vol. 2. p. 355, 356.

hostages,

hostages, and in case of his cowardice or desertion, suffer death. The infantry are not regularly clothed, but are armed with muskets and sabres: the cavalry have spears of seven or eight feet in length. The imperial magazines are said to contain about 20,000 bad firelocks.

Navy.]---The war-boats already described in the historical article, amount to about 500 in number, and form the chief branch of the armed force of the empire.

Revenue.]---The revenue arises from the tenth of all produce and foreign imports. There are not sufficient data for calculating its amount ; but from various circumstances, the imperial treasury is supposed to be immensely rich.

Commerce.]--A considerable trade is carried on between Ummerapoora and China.* The exports consist of cotton, ivory, amber, precious stones, and other articles ; and the returns are made in raw and wrought silks, velvets, leaf-gold, paper, and some articles of hardware. European broadcloths and cutlery, coarse Bengal muslins, China-ware and glass, are also imported by foreigners. The inland trade is very considerable : several thousands of boats being employed in carrying rice from the lower provinces for the supply of Ummerapoora, and the northern parts of the empire. The Birmans, like the Thibettians, have no coin : silver bullion and lead are the common currency. The trade of this country is of incalculable importance to British India. English manufactures are exported to Rangoon, and the returns are made in teak-timber, so indispensable at Calcutta.

Manufactures.]--The chief manufactures are of the

* Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 3. p. 273.

ornamental kind; and the Birmans particularly excel in gilding. At Chagain, is a manufacture of marble divinities. The material is remarkably fine, being almost transparent.

Population.]---The population of the Birman empire is estimated by Col. Symes at 17,000,000, a number which, he thinks, is not widely erroneous, but rather falling short of, than exceeding the truth. He acknowledges it, however, to be mere conjecture, founded on the information which he received of the number of towns and villages, representing them as amounting to 8000, and his own supposition of the population that each might contain.*

Political importance and relations.]—From the enterprising ambition of the government, and the daring courage of the people, it is not improbable that the Birman empire may, at no very distant period, extend itself over the whole of Exterior India, unless the high ranges of mountains should prove a security to the united kingdom of Tonquin and Cochin China. Siam, Laos, and Cambodia, are particularly threatened, and the Birmans may perhaps become not only formidable to China, but troublesome neighbours to Bengal. The superiority of European arms and tactics, however, must prevent any serious apprehension for the British possessions from any Oriental power.†

Language.]—The Birman language, like the others of Exterior India, has been little investigated. Its alphabet represents thirty-three simple sounds, and it is written from left to right like those of Europe.

* Col. Symes's Embassy, vol. 2. p. 353.

† Col. Symes justly regards the Birman empire as the second Oriental power, and inferior only to China. From its contiguity to the British dominions in India, it becomes of very great importance in the political system of that quarter of the globe. Embassy to Ava, vol. 3. p. 280.

Literature.]---

Literature.].---The Birman literature presents a spectacle, which an European would not expect to meet with beyond the Ganges. Col. Symes was astonished at the number of books in the imperial library, which were deposited in about 100 large chests. An adequate idea of this repository of Oriental learning, will be best formed from the description given by that intelligent traveller. "The books," says he, "were regularly classed; and the contents of each chest were written in gold letters on the lid. The librarian opened two, and shewed me some very beautiful writing on their leaves of ivory, the margins of which were ornamented with flowers of gold, neatly executed. I saw also some books written in the ancient Palli, the religious text.* Every thing seemed to be arranged with perfect regularity, and I was informed, that there were books upon divers subjects, more on divinity than on any other; but history, music, medicine, painting, and romance, had their separate treatises. The volumes were disposed under distinct heads, regularly numbered; and if all the other chests were as well filled as those that were submitted to our inspection, it is not improbable that his Birman majesty may possess a more numerous library than any potentate, from the banks of the Danube to the borders of China.† What a vast collection of Oriental literature unknown to European investigation! What a mass of curious information relative to the ancient history, the mythology, and the science of the Orientals, may be concealed in this repository! Almost every Kioum, or monastery, possesses a library. The Birman priests,

* The Palli seems to be nearly allied to the Sanscrit. Asiatic Researches, vol. 1.

† Symes, vol. 3. p. 96.

however,

however, are reckoned inferior to the Bramins of Hindostan in learning. The emperor greatly favours the latter, on account of their superior knowledge; and most of the grandees entertain some of them constantly in their houses.* It is not improbable that their pretended skill in astrology, a science to which the Birmans, like the other Asiatics, are extremely addicted, procures for the Bramins this pre-eminence.

Manners and customs.]—The manners and customs of the Birmans, modelled by a similar religion and government, bear a considerable resemblance to those of the other Orientals, with shades of difference arising from more minute and peculiar circumstances. Polygamy is prohibited by the Birman laws; but concubinage is allowed to an unlimited extent.† The passion of jealousy, so general in the East, seems here to be almost unknown. The females are not immured in harams, nor surrounded with guards, but enjoy the same freedom as in European countries. But in other respects they have great cause to complain of their treatment. The law stamps a degrading distinction between the sexes: the evidence of a woman is not considered as of equal weight with that of a man; nor is a female even suffered to enter a court of justice, but is obliged to deliver her testimony on the outside. The custom of letting their women to strangers, has long been practised: it is not esteemed shameful, nor is the woman thought dishonoured. It is said that these temporary wives are seldom unfaithful to their foreign masters; and they are often found useful in transacting their business. But neither the woman, nor the female children which

* Col. Symes, vol. 1. p. 234, and vol. 2 p. 140.
† Col. Symes, vol. 2. p. 348.

they

they may bear, can be taken out of the country. On this subject, the law is extremely rigorous, and the officers of the custom-house exceedingly vigilant. The emigration of the male sex is permitted; but that of females is strictly prohibited, being considered as tending to weaken the state by diminishing the sources of population.

National character.]---The Birmans, although living under the same parallels as the people of Bengal, and separated from them only by an inconsiderable barrier, display a total opposition of character. They are bold and enterprising, lively, inquisitive, active, irascible, and impatient. In war, they display the ferocity of savages: in peace, they shew considerable gentleness and civilization. Their edifices and barges, constructed in a singular style of Oriental elegance, attest the excellence of their genius, which seems to want nothing but culture.

ASIATIC

ASIATIC ISLANDS.

THE Asiatic islands present a perplexed field for investigation. Various arrangements have been formed by geographers in order to class them in distinct and appropriate groups; and different names have been given to these classifications. In this compendious exhibition of the world, I shall not presume to trespass on the time, the patience, and the pockets of my readers, by useless and tedious discussions concerning the propriety of arrangements and general names, but shall endeavour to describe geographical objects as nearly as possible in the order in which nature presents them to view. Those nearest to China and India, I shall, therefore, designate by the well-known appellation of Oriental islands, and arrange them in six grand divisions: 1st. the islands or empire of Japan; 2d, the Phillippines; 3d, the large isle of Borneo; 4th, the Celebes; 5th, the Moluccas, or Spice Islands; 6th, the isles of Sunda, or the Sumatran chain, extending as an immense barrier in front of those widely scattered regions. This plan of division appears the most conformable to their geographical position, and no arrangement can be at once adapted to their situation, relative extent, and political or moral importance. In the last point of view,

Java

Java would rank the next to Japan. The island of Ceylon, remote from all these, and closely connected with India, cannot be brought under any of these divisions, but must constitute a separate article. The immense regions stretching far to the south of Asia, and the numerous islands widely scattered in the vast Pacific Ocean, shall here be arranged under the rational divisions and scientific appellations of Australasia and Polynesia, unexceptionable and approximate terms, the former, expressive of a southerly situation, the latter, of an aggregate number of islands. These names were invented half a century ago by a writer equally distinguished for the extent of his erudition, the clearness of his comprehension, the accuracy of his judgement, and the elegance and precision of his taste.* Their evident propriety has caused them to be adopted by several eminent geographers; and if Australasia and Polynesia be not admitted as grand divisions, all those extensively dispersed islands must be classed under the head of the Asiatic isles, or the more vague appellation of new discoveries.† Geographical systems and names, however, produce no change in the objects; and notwithstanding the divisions here adopted, the reader will find no difficulty in classing the descriptions according to his own ideas of connection and consistency, as no scientific arrangement of those parts of the world is yet established by general acceptation.

* Le President Du Brosse. Hist. de la Navigation des Terres Australes, tom. 1.

† In Guthrie's grammar they are designated by the name of new discoveries.

JAPAN.

The group of islands which forms the empire of Japan, surpasses all the other Oriental isles in political and moral importance. Except China, none of the existing monarchies of Asia can claim a superior rank; and perhaps none of the countries of that extensive and celebrated continent is more calculated to excite curiosity, from the singularity of its government, its numerous population, its progress in the arts of civilized life, and the peculiar manners of its people.

The empire of Japan extends from the 30th to the 41st degree of north latitude, and from the 131st to the 142d degree of east longitude, and consists of three principal islands, with a number of others of inconsiderable extent. Nipon is by far the most important, extending in length from south-west to north-east, about 750 English miles; but so narrow, that its medial breadth cannot be estimated at more than eighty miles, although it may perhaps be about 150 in two projecting parts. The other chief islands are Kiusm and Sikokf. The length of the former is about 140, and its breadth about ninety miles in the broadest part. Sikokf is about ninety miles in length, by forty-five in breadth. To the north of Nipon is Jeffo, another large island, which has received some Japanese colonies, and is subject to Japan. But the native inhabitants are a savage people; and it may be regarded as a foreign conquest, rather than a part of this civilized empire.

Face of the country.]—In Japan, the face of the country is extremely picturesque. Although there are plains of considerable extent, it may in general be said to consist of mountains, eminences, and valleys. It is also agreeably diversified with numerous rivers

and

and rivulets, and with various and singular tribes of vegetation. The coasts have an appearance scarcely less romantic than the country, being almost every where rocky and precipitous, and surrounded by a turbulent sea. The ranges of mountains are numerous, and some of them of considerable elevation, being covered with snow almost throughout the year.* Many of the mountains are cultivated in terraces, and others are covered with forests: most of them abound with evergreen trees and chrystalline springs, and there are several volcanoes. In the surrounding seas are also several volcanic islands.†

Rivers.]—The Japanese rivers have not been accurately delineated. The Oringawa is represented as one of the largest and most dangerous in the country. The Fusigawa and the Sackgawa, are also large and rapid rivers. The Jedogawa passes by Osaka, where it is crossed by several bridges of cedar of 100 or 120 yards in length. Several others are enumerated by Kœmpfer; but our geography of this celebrated empire is far from being complete. Japan does not present any instances of inland navigation; the mountainous nature of the country prevents the cutting of canals; and the proximity of the sea on all sides renders them unnecessary.

Mineralogy.]—The mineralogy of Japan, comprises gold, silver, copper, iron, and tin; but brass is rare, the calamine being imported from Tonquin. Among the fossils are beautiful flesh-coloured steatite, porcelain-clay, pumice, arbestos, and white marble. In

* The mountain of Fusi, which is seen from the road between Miaco and Jeddo, was covered with snow on the 29th of May. Thunberg's Trav. vol. 3, p. 212.

† Kœmpfer, vol. 1, p. 166.

gold, Japan is one of the most opulent countries in the world. The richest mine and the finest gold is said to be near Sado, in the large island of Nipon. But in order that this metal may not lose its value, the digging of more than a certain quantity is prohibited. Silver appears to have been formerly found in greater quantities than at present, as it was once a very considerable article of exportation; but at present great sums in ducatoons are imported from the settlements of the Dutch East-India Company. Copper is common in every part of the empire; and is in general richly intermingled with gold. This metal constitutes the chief wealth of several of the provinces, and is exported in great quantities by the Dutch and Chinese merchants. Iron is much scarcer; but it is found in two or three of the provinces. No mine of any metal whatever can be opened without the imperial permission, and when that is obtained, two-thirds of the produce belong to the emperor, and one-third to the proprietor.* Under such a regulation, when the expences of working are considered, mining cannot be a very profitable speculation to the subject.

Mineral waters.]—There are in Japan several mineral waters, which the inhabitants use for the cure of divers disorders. Those of Omsen and Ohamma seem to be among the most celebrated.†

Soil.]—The soil is in general rocky and barren: the country owes its fertility to the industry of its inhabitants, and the frequent rains that moisten its surface.

Climate.]—The climate of Japan is far from being

* Thunberg, vol. 4. † Ibid. vol. 3. p. 102.

agreeable;

agreeable: the heat in summer is extremely violent; and, were it not mitigated by the cooling influence of the sea-breezes, would be almost insupportable. Thunberg, however, does not appear to have ever experienced the heats of Persia, Arabia, and the interior of Africa. Those regions are not cooled by any breezes from the sea; and from every circumstance of situation, it must be presumed that they are subject to heats far more intense than those of Japan. From our author's thermometrical observations, it appears that at Nangasaki, the greatest degree of heat in August was 98°, and in January, the severest cold was 35°. The north and north-east winds, however, in winter, are extremely sharp; and during the whole year the weather is very changeable. The falls of rain are heavy and frequent, especially in the rainy season, which commences about Midsummer.* Tempests, earthquakes, and hurricanes, are also common in Japan.†

Vegetable productions.]—On account of the vast population of the country, and the consequent necessity of paying the utmost attention to the introduction and culture of every article that can contribute to the sustenance of man, the vegetable productions are various; and notwithstanding the infertility of the soil, the industry of the Japanese renders them abundant. Wheat, rye, barley, and buck-wheat, are cultivated in many parts: but rice is the chief grain. Various kinds of garden-vegetables also abound, among which may be

* Thunberg's Trav. vol. 3. p. 234. See Thunberg's thermometrical observations, vol. 3. p. 237, &c.

† From Thunberg's observations, the climate of Japan appears very disagreeable and severe; and were it not for the extreme heat which sometimes prevails, would resemble that of the Highlands of Scotland.

 reckoned,

reckoned, beans, peas, turnips, cabbages, and a particular kind of potatoe, different from those of Europe. Among their fruits may be reckoned different kinds of oranges; and they have two sorts of mulberry-trees, one of which is valuable, as the favorite food of the silk-worm; and the other, for its fine, white, and fibrous inner bark, which is manufactured into paper.* Tea grows in every part of the country. In general, there is a great similarity between the productions of Japan, and those of China, a circumstance probably owing to the mutual interchange of useful vegetables. Indeed, in the high state of agriculture in those two countries, it is difficult to know what productions are indigenous, especially as cotton, indigo, and various other articles, which are probably natives of the more southern parts of Asia, are here cultivated with great success. In the agricultural system of China and Japan, the same similarity is observable as in the nature of their productions. In Japan, as well as in China, agriculture is held in the highest estimation; and, except in the most barren and unimprovable spots, the land is universally cultivated.† If we compare Thunberg's account of Japan with the relations of the British embassy to China, it will appear, that the terrace agriculture is more generally and more assiduously practised in the former, than in the latter country.‡ The mountainous surface of Japan may indeed render

* Thunberg observes, that tea grows spontaneously in every part of the country, and is drank at all times of the day. It is ground to powder, and made like coffee. Trav. vol. 4. p. 41, &c.

† See Thunberg's account of the Japanese agriculture, which seems to excel that of China. Trav. vol. 4. p. 80, &c.

‡ Compare Thunberg, vol. 4. p. 80. with Barrow, p. 568. The mountains of Japan are for the most part cultivated in terraces to the summits. Thunberg, ubi supra.

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it more frequently necessary; and it must at the same time be considered, that the British embassy traversed only the most level parts of China. The Japanese equal the Chinese in their attention to the collection and management of manures, in the nicety of their weeding, and in all the minute operations of agricultural industry. The tillage system is more general even than in China. In Japan, the practice of universal cultivation prevails almost to the total exclusion of pasturage and cattle, a plan of agricultural economy extremely different from the system of European husbandry, which supposes a certain proportion of pasture-ground necessary for the production of manure for the arable part of the farm. The want of cattle, as already observed, accounts for the extraordinary attention paid to the collection of manure both in China and Japan. To these remarks on the vegetable system of this singular empire, it may not be amiss to add, that timber is far from being plentiful, as so high a state of cultivation admits of few forests, except those which decorate some of the mountains. In those high central parts, the most remarkable tree is the rhus vernix, or varnish tree, from the bark of which exudes a resinous gum, supposed to be the basis of the exquisitely beautiful and inimitable varnish, so greatly admired in every country of Europe,

Zoology.]—The zoology of Japan is a barren subject. The agricultural system of that country, as already observed, almost excludes the breeding of cattle; and a country so thickly peopled, as well as so highly cultivated, leaves little room for the propagation of wild animals. The quadrupeds are consequently few in number. Neither sheep nor goats are found in the

 empire,

empire;* but the abundance of silk and cotton compensates the want of wool. No swine are seen, except a few in the neighbourhood of Nangasaki. The number of horses is inconsiderable,† and still fewer horned cattle are seen. The Japanese use neither their flesh nor their milk; and where any are seen, they are used only for the purposes of agriculture.‡ The food of the people consists almost entirely of fish, fowl, and vegetables. A few dogs and cats are kept: a few wolves appear in the mountainous regions; and foxes are met with in different parts.||

Natural curiosities.]—The natural curiosities of this interesting country have not been explored, as few Europeans have visited the interior.

Antiquities.]—The temples and palaces of the Japanese having always been of a slight construction, and generally of wood, no monuments of antiquity can remain. The delightful mountain of Jesan, which is esteemed a sacred place, and is said to be decorated with 3000 temples, may be considered as a curiosity of Pagan superstition, as may also their monstrous idols, which will, in another place, be mentioned.

CHIEF CITIES AND TOWNS.

Jeddo.]—The largest and most populous city of Japan, is Jeddo, the seat of the Kube, or secular emperor. If indeed it be, as the Japanese assured Mr. Thunberg, no less than twenty-one leagues, or sixty-three miles in circuit,§ it is far the most extensive city in the world; but it must be supposed that these dimensions

* Thunberg's Trav. vol. 3. p. 22. † Ibid. vol. 4. p. 94, 95,

‡ Ibid, vol. 3. p. 22 and 137.

|| Wolves are so rare, that one was brought to Jeddo as a curiosity. Thunberg, vol. 3, p. 137,,

§ Thunberg's Trav. vol, 3. p. 194, and vol. 3. p. 282i

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are loosely estimated, and comprise many neighbouring villages; and our author remarks, that on one side, the suburbs extend the length of six miles along the shore.* He also informs us, that from a commanding eminence, in that part which constitutes the imperial residence, he and the other persons belonging to the Dutch embassy, had a most delightful prospect of the whole of that immense city, which he says may vie with Pekin.† Jeddo is situated on a bay, or inlet of the sea, which is very shallow and muddy. The largest vessels frequently lie at anchor at the distance of fifteen miles from the city, others at about six miles; and several hundreds of small craft and boats were seen ranged in rows according to their different sizes and burdens. From such situation, it is evident that this metropolis of Japan is secure from any naval attack. The streets of Jeddo are long, straight, and regular: many of them are from 80 to 100 feet in breadth, and divided at certain distances by gates, where is commonly placed a high ladder, on which the watchman can ascend for the purpose of discovering any appearance of fire.‡ The houses are only one, or, at the most, two stories high, and are here, as in every other part of Japan, generally constructed of wood and plaster, and white-washed, or painted, so as to have exactly the resemblance of stone. They consist only of one large room, which is divided at pleasure into different apartments, by screens ingeniously con-

* Thunberg, vol. 3. p. 168.

† Thunberg, vol. 3. p. 194, and 282. It must, however, be observed, that Thunberg had never been at Pekin, and could form his idea of that city only from the descriptions given by others.

‡ Conflagrations are frequent at Jeddo, and many of the houses have a large vat of water placed at the top, as well as warehouses of stone adjoining, for the preservation of merchandise. Thunberg's Trav. vol. 3. p. 180.

trived, and sliding in grooves. Almost every house has a place set apart for bathing, as the Japanese are fond of personal cleanliness; and also a small yard, decorated with a little mount, some trees, shrubs, and flower-pots. The windows are all of oiled paper, no glass being used for that purpose; and neither chimnies nor stoves are known in the country. The fires are made in copper kettles of various sizes; and charcoal is used for fuel; but as it sometimes smokes, the apartment becomes dirty and black, and the fumes are extremely pernicious to the eyes. The Japanese houses have scarcely any furniture; a mattrass stuffed with cotton, and spread on the floor-mat, serves them for a bed; and chairs are unknown. The mats for their floors are of a fine species of grass, interwoven with rice straw. The decorations of their rooms consist chiefly of painted paper, sometimes embellished with silver and gold: with this both the walls and the ceiling are generally covered. The city of Jeddo is exceedingly populous, as well as extensive; and an immense number of strangers resort hither from all parts of Japan. When the princes pay their annual visits to the emperor, several hundreds, and sometimes more than a thousand persons compose each retinue.

The front rooms of the houses of Jeddo, and other large cities, are generally either work-shops or sale shops; and in the latter, numerous patterns of various kinds of goods are exposed. But it does not appear that such a profusion of painting and gilding is displayed as in the shops and principal streets of Pekin; nor does the court of his Japanese majesty exhibit the same degree of splendor as that of the emperor of China.* That part of Jeddo which is set apart for

* Compare Thunberg's and Kœmpfer's accounts of Jeddo with Staunton's and Barrow's description of Pekin.

the imperial residence, is indeed of vast extent, being said to be fifteen miles in circumference.* It is surrounded with fossés and stone walls, and secured by draw-bridges, and numerous guards of soldiers, who are well clothed, and armed with sabres, &c. after the Japanese manner. At one of the gates, the daily guard consists of 1000 men; and a long line of soldiers, ranged on each side of the way, form an avenue to the imperial palace. In this vast inclosure are lodged the families of the Japanese princes, which are constantly retained at court as pledges of their fidelity. Here are also many handsome streets composed of large houses belonging to these princes, and to the great officers of state. The interior citadel contains the emperor's palace, and that of the hereditary prince, which are separate buildings, defended by wide ditches, stone walls, and other bulwarks. The emperor's palace is situated on an eminence; and although it occupies a large space, consists of only one story. The large saloon is 600 feet long, by 300 in breadth. None of the rooms appear to have any furniture; but the floors were covered with very white straw mats. The lacquered cornices and doors, with the gilding of the locks, hinges, &c. seem to be the only decorations. The emperor is addressed with prostration,† but has no throne, nor other regalia; and, like all the princes of the country, he is clothed in the same manner as the opulent inhabitants. A numerous train of officers and attendants seem to constitute the whole of Japanese magnificence.‡

Miaco.]—Miaco is the ancient capital, and by reason of its central situation, the most commercial city

* Thunberg, vol. 3. p. 189. † Thunberg, vol. 3, p. 193.

‡ Ibid, vol. 3. p. 207.

of Japan. It is situated on a level plain, of about twelve miles in length, and a mile and a half in breadth. In this city are established the best manufacturers and artists, as well as the most opulent merchants. Here are excellent manufactures of velvets and silks, interwoven with silver and gold. The celebrated Japanese copper is melted and refined at Miaco: and there all the coin is struck. There are various manufactures of gold, silver, and copper; and those of steel are carried to the highest degree of perfection, of which their incomparable scymeters are a proof.* The palace of the Dairi, or ecclesiastical emperor, is within the city, and forms a distinct quarter, being of a great extent, and encompassed by a stone wall and a ditch. In this inclosure the Dairi passes his life with his concubines, priests, and attendants, without ever going beyond its precincts. Although divested of his temporal power, he is still too great and too holy to be seen by profane eyes. The suburb of Fusimi, adjoining to Miaco, is about nine miles in length. The only carts which Thunberg saw in Japan, were in the vicinity of this city.

Nangasaki.]—Nangasaki is the only port which the Dutch are allowed to frequent; and both they and the Chinese are laid under very severe restrictions. The city is tolerably large, standing on a bay, in a mountainous part of the coast. The Dutch factory is confined to a small island, separated by a narrow channel from the city. Mr. Thunberg passed through several large cities in his journey to Jeddo: and populous towns and villages appear to be numerous. The roads

* Thunberg, vol. 3. p. 141, and vol. 4. p. 60. This author says, that the Japanese scymeters greatly surpass the best Spanish blades, and bear a very high price, vol. 4. p. 14.

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are excellent, being never cut up by carriages: and there is no want of inns.

History]—The Japanese are undoubtedly of Chinese or Tartaric origin, but their history is little known or investigated by Europeans; and being almost totally unconnected with that of all the rest of the world, it cannot be very interesting. Japan, like other countries, was originally divided among a number of petty states, or tribes, which were governed by different chiefs, and in process of time united under one head. The history of their monarchs commences about 660 years before the Christian æra; but those early records may be considered as of doubtful authenticity. Syn Mu is celebrated in the Japanese histories as the founder of the monarchy. He is said to have first reduced the different principalities to one political system, to have modelled their government, and improved their laws. The emperors of this race were designated by the title of dairi, and united, in their persons, all spiritual and temporal authority. The first attack on the country by any foreign power, is said to have been made in the year 799, by the Tartars, who over-ran part of the country, but were at last totally exterminated. Seventy-six emperors of the race of Syn Mu, had reigned with unlimited authority till about the year 1142, when a revolution happened, which considerably abridged their power, and effected a material change in the system of government. Civil commotions having risen in the country, Yoritomo, a brave commander and general of the imperial army, reduced the rebels; but seeing himself at the head of the whole military force of the empire, and master of the affections of the soldiery, he arrogated to himself a great past of the authority of the dairi. From this

period

period the government of Japan continued to be divided between the sovereign and the commanders of the army; and it may easily be conceived, that the latter would soon gain the ascendancy. The chief military transaction that took place under this joint government, was the attack made by the Tartars in the thirteenth century. Kublai Khan having conquered China in the thirteenth century, an immense fleet and army were sent against Japan; but the fleet was dispersed by tempests, and the whole Tartar force annihilated. In the year 1585, a new revolution took place in the Japanese government, which annihilated the temporal sovereignty of the dairi, or emperor. Taiko Samma, a man of low extraction, being only the son of a peasant, had, by his superior abilities, raised himself to the chief command of the army. This general having reduced to obedience all the Japanese princes, that had opposed his elevation, or thwarted his views, assumed the whole secular government of the empire, and left nothing to the dairi but his spiritual authority.

The Portugueze having discovered Japan towards the middle of the sixteenth century, the Christian religion was introduced into the country, and made a most rapid progress. The first missionaries arrived in Japan in 1549, and soon spread themselves into all the provinces of the empire. The Portugueze long enjoyed the most unlimited freedom to travel, to trade, and to preach in all parts of the country. In the business both of commerce and conversion, they were equally successful: the former was exceedingly lucrative; and the latter made so rapid a progress, that several of the Japanese princes embraced Christianity. Great numbers of Portugueze went and settled in Japan;

pan; and the Christian religion was held in so high estimation, that in 1582, an embassy was sent from the emperor to Pope Gregory XIII. with letters and valuable presents. The Portugueze are said to have annually exported from this country 300 tons of gold, and an immense quantity of silver. But the incredible profits of their lucrative commerce, and the rapid progress of their religion, inflated them with pride; and their imprudence brought on their ruin. In proportion as their riches and credit increased, their haughtiness became insupportable; and in 1586, a decree was issued for their extermination. A dreadful persecution was commenced against the Christians; and in 1590, upwards of 20,000 were put to death. The persecution, however, ceased: numbers of the Japanese became proselytes; and in the two following years not fewer than 12,000 were converted and baptized. It is said that one of the Japanese emperors, with his court and army, professed the Christian religion; and had the Portugueze acted with prudence, and adapted their conduct to the character of a nation so haughty and so decisive in all its measures, there seems to be little doubt that Japan would have been completely christianised. But their haughtiness was nothing abated; and a Japanese prince being grossly affronted by a Christian prelate, laid his case before the emperor, which gave rise to another persecution. The Christian priests were forbidden to preach: a great number of them were banished from the country; and the Portugueze traders were confined to the island of Desima, in the bay of Nangasaki. During these transactions, the Dutch, whose commercial jealousy and unprincipled conduct was, in that age, so remarkable and so fatally experi-

enced

enced by the English at Amboyna, were endeavouring to supplant the Portugueze in the lucrative trade of Japan. Being at war with Portugal, they captured a vessel of that nation, on board of which a letter, containing the particulars of a plot for dethroning the Japanese emperor, was pretended to be found. The government of Japan now came to a final determinatian to banish all Christians from the empire, or put them to death without quarter. The struggle continued during the space of near forty years, and terminated in the total eradication of the Christian religion, and the final overthrow of the Portugueze trade in Japan. The Christians made their last stand in the castle of Simabara, where 37,000 of them, after having sustained a siege, were all put to the sword. Both the Portugueze and the Spaniards have made several ineffectual attempts to re-establish a trade with Japan. But since that time no European nation, except the Dutch, has ever been permitted to carry on any commerce with that country. The Dutch, however, could never obtain the privileges which the Portugueze had enjoyed. Their trade to Japan has always lain under rigorous and humiliating restrictions : it has been constantly declining, and is now inconsiderable. The Japanese do not seem to desire any connection, either political or commercial, with any foreign nation.

The expulsion of the Portugueze, and the extirpation of Christianity in Japan, are transactions which, it must be confessed, are involved in mysterious obscurity. The Dutch have been strongly suspected of having been at the bottom of that iniquitous affair; and several circumstances tend to corroborate the suspicion. Impartial candour, however, will acknowledge that the conduct of the Portugueze must have been

been blameable. The Japanese treated the missionaries with liberality, and embraced the Christian religion with ardour. Some strong reasons, therefore, must have produced so total a change in the sentiments of a nation so acute, so penetrating, so steady in its measures, and so little liable to be deceived by misrepresentation. Erroneously supposing the unwarrantable conduct of the Christians to be a consequence of their doctrines, the government took every means to prevent the re-establishment of their religion in Japan. In order to discover whether any Japanese Christians were concealed in the country, various measures were devised, and particularly that of annually trampling on the cross, and the image of the virgin and child. This every Japanese, at least in the town and neighbourhood of Nangasaki, is obliged to perform; but that the Dutch comply with this ceremony, as some have asserted, is an unjust and malevolent aspersion.*

Since the expulsion of the Portuguese, Japan appears to have enjoyed perfect tranquillity unconnected with the rest of the world, free from any desire of foreign conquests, and ever ready to repel any foreign aggression.

Religion.]—The religion of Japan, like that of the ancient philosophers, and of all enlightened Pagans, is radically Polytheism, in subordination to Theism. There are three principal sects, those of Sinto, Budso, and Shuto.† The first consider the Supreme Being as far above all human adoration, and worship inferior deities as mediators. They reject the doctrine of transmigration, but believe that while a place of bliss is assigned to the souls of the virtuous, those of the wicked wander in the air till their offences be expiated.

* Thunberg, vol. 3. p. 89.

† Thunberg, vol. 4. p. 19.

The professors of this sect abstain from animal food, detest bloodshed, and will not touch any dead body. They have two orders of priests, the secular and the monastic, with several convents of both sexes.* Their festivals and modes of worship are gay; for they regard their gods as beings who delight in dispensing happiness. The next sect is that of Budha, whose faith, in passing from India through China to Japan, has been mingled with several foreign tenets. It still, however, retains the doctrine of the metempsychosis. The third sect, which is that of the Philosophers, appears to be nearly the same as that of Confucius, and can only be considered as a pure Deism. It acknowledges a Supreme Being, the soul of the world, but does not admit of inferior gods, temples, or religious forms. The professors of this sect, like the Confucians, hold a virtuous life to be the chief source of pleasure. The Japanese temples are constructed in the same style of architecture as their palaces and houses, except that they are rendered more conspicuous, by having several towers of a singular appearance, which constitute their chief external distinction. But what is most remarkable in those sanctuaries of pagan superstition, is the number of idols of singular shapes and stupendous magnitude, which constitute the ornament of the temples, and the objects of worship. Mr. Thunberg being permitted to visit the principal temples at Miaco, which stand on the declivity of a mountain skirting the plain, on which the city is situated, and commands the most delightful prospects, has given a description of the largest and most remarkable. It is supported by ninety-six pil-

* The rules of some orders of the Japanese monks are very rigorous. Thunberg, vol. 4. p. 28.

lars,

lars, several of which are painted, and more than six feet in diameter. This temple has several lofty, but narrow entrances; and the interior is gloomy. The idol, Daibud, placed nearly in the middle of the temple, is of a magnitude sufficient to strike the spectator with "terror and awe." This image, which is richly gilded, is in a sitting posture, raised about six feet from the ground, with its legs crossed before it, in the Indian manner. The ears are long, the hair short and curling, the shoulders naked, the body covered with a wrapper, the right hand raised, and the left hand laid against the body. "To any one," says Mr. Thunberg, "who has not seen this image, the size of it must appear almost incredible." The interpreters assured him, that six men might sit in the palm of its hand; and in measuring it by the eye, he thought that it could not be less than thirty feet broad across the shoulders. Notwithstanding, however, its monstrous size, it appeared to be well proportioned. This idol, as well as the sect by which it is worshipped, derives its origin from India. Another temple, little less majestic than that of Daibud, is sacred to the god Quanwon, whose image, with those of the *Dii Minores*, or inferior divinities, his attendants, are placed in this solemn recess. "In the middle sat Quanwon himself, furnished with thirty-six hands: near him were placed sixteen images above the common size of men, but much less than the idol; and these occupied a separate room, and partitioned off, as it were, to themselves. On both sides next to these stood two rows of gilt idols, each with twenty hands. Afterwards were placed in rows, on each side, idols of the size of a man, quite close to each other, the number of which I could not reckon. Those that were nearest to us, or forwards, were the smallest, and those

those that stood behind gradually larger, so that all the twelve rows could be seen very distinctly.* The whole number of idols in this solemn recess of superstition, is said to be not less than 33,333. Every system of idolatry is originally allegorical; and it seems that among the Orientals, the magnitude and number of their idols are expressive of the greatness and infinite power of the Deity. Paganism, in its various modifications, exhibits a remarkable trait in the history of the human mind. The religious absurdities of the acute Orientals, as well as of the learned and philosophical Greeks, shew the observations of reason when destitute of the guidance of revelation.

Government.]—The government of this empire is of a singular form. Mention has already been made of the two monarchs, one secular, the other ecclesiastical. At present, the secular emperor is the sole sovereign of Japan. The dairi, or pontif, resides at Miaco, where he still keeps his court, but has no concern in the temporal administration. The provinces are governed by hereditary princes, who enjoy the revenues of their respective districts, out of which they support their own courts and military establishments, and defray all the civil expences. These princes are strictly responsible for their administration, their families remaining at the emperor's court as hostages for their fidelity. Each of them is also obliged to make, in person, his annual appearance at Jeddo, on which occasion the visit is performed with great pomp,

* Thunberg, vol. 3. p. 218, &c. It appears that in Japan, as in China, there is no public worship, but the temples are always open to the votaries of the different idols. Ibid, vol. 4. p. 22. The kubo, or secular emperor, professes the religion of Budha, originally derived from India, or from Ceylon. Ibid, vol 4. p. 23.

and accompanied with valuable presents.* The emperor, as in the feudal state of Europe, has the immediate government, and the revenue only of the towns and provinces, which constitute the imperial domain. The constitution of Japan is therefore an absolute hereditary monarchy, governed by a number of absolute hereditary princes, whose jealousy of each other's power, concurs with domestic pledges to retain them in subordination to one supreme monarch.

Laws.]—The laws of Japan are few, but rigidly and impartially enforced.† Emigration is a capital offence; but as Japanese colonies are found in several of the Oriental islands, this law appears to be here as in China, merely theoretical, or at least to be understood with great latitude, and to admit of various exceptions. Parents, &c. are answerable for the offences of those, whose education they ought to have superintended; and most crimes are punished with death, fines being considered as partiality to the rich. The brief code of Japanese laws is posted up in a convenient place in every town and village of the empire. The police is excellent, each town having a chief magistrate, and each street a commissary, to watch over the public tranquillity; besides two inhabitants who in turn patrole the street every night, in order to guard against fire.

Army.]—From the best authorities, the standing army maintained by the Japanese princes is estimated at 368,000 infantry, and 38,000 cavalry; and that of the emperor at 100,000 foot, and 20,000 horse, constituting in the whole a regular military force of 468,000

* Thunberg, vol. 3. p. 172.

† For the Japanese laws, see Thunberg, vol. 4. p. 64. &c.

 infantry,

infantry, and 58,000 cavalry.* It seems difficult, however, to reconcile the estimate of so numerous a cavalry with Thunberg's account of the scarcity of horses.† Many circumstances, indeed, which travellers have related concerning Japan, require some explanation.

Revenue.]—The revenue raised by the different princes of Japan, has, by a minute investigation, been stated at about 28,340,000*l* sterling, exclusive ot those arising from the imperial domain, which alone belong to the emperor.‡

Commerce.]—The chief foreign trade of Japan is with China, the exports consisting of copper, lacquered wares, &c. the imports are raw silk, sugar, and drugs, with various other articles. The trade of the Dutch to this country appears now to be inconsiderable, as only two ships are employed by the East-India Company. The interior commerce of the empire, however, is very considerable. The harbours are crowded with coasting vessels, and the high roads with passengers and goods. The shops are well stocked, and large fairs are held in different places.

Manufactures.]—The Japanese have excellent manufactures of iron and copper. In those of silk and cotton, they yield to none of the Oriental nations; and their lacquered wares excel every thing of the kind that is met with in any other part of the world. Their porcelain is also greatly esteemed. Their swords display extraordinary skill. They also make telescopes; and have several manufactures of glass, as well as of

* Varenius's Descrip. Jap. ch. 9. ap. Pinkerton, vol. 2. p. 160.

† Thunberg, ubi supra.

‡ Varenius ap. Pinkerton, vol. 2. p. 159. This, however, appears very improbable, and must be an exaggerated calculation.

 paper,

paper, which is prepared from the bark of a particular species of the mulberry-tree. The Japanese manufacture every article necessary for the home consumption; and appear to have still less inclination to foreign connection and commerce than the Chinese. It is well known that their ports are shut against all foreign vessels except the Chinese and the Dutch; and that neither of these are admitted but under numerous and severe restrictions.

Population.]—The population of Japan, like that of the other Asiatic countries, is a subject that defies all precision; and no estimate can be formed on any other basis than that of conjecture, founded on general appearances, from the number and magnitude of the towns and villages, and the inconceivable throng of people seen on the high roads. But when we are told that the tokaido, the chief of the seven great roads of the empire, is sometimes more crowded than the most frequented streets of European capitals,* the account must be received with some degree of doubt, or at least we must believe this to be the case only on some extraordinary occasion. As the high roads, however, are said to pass through almost continuous villages; and the capitals, Miaco and Jeddo, are represented as two of the largest cities in the world, those circumstances exhibit something more precise, and indicate an extraordinary population. A modern geographer, by an ingenious conjecture, founded on the extent of the country, which is equal to about one-tenth of the surface of China, supposes that Japan may contain about 30,000,000 of people.†

* Kœmpfer, vol. 2. p. 345. Thunberg also says, that the high roads are crowded. vol. 4. p. 106.

† Pinkerton, vol. 2. p. 160.

And

And if China really contain 300,000,000, this conjectural estimate is not destitute of probability. If Japan be mountainous, China presents not only mountains, but many marshy and uncultivated tracts;* and as the agricultural system and ordinary food of the inhabitants, with every other circumstance that can influence the increase of the human species, are in both countries nearly similar, it is not improbable, that in proportion to their extent, their population may be about equal. All travellers, indeed, agree that the population of Japan is astonishing; but it must at the same time be considered, that those travellers who furnish our intelligence, have seen only the most populous parts of the country.

Language.]—The Japanese language seems to have little connection with the Chinese, although numerous analogies indicate the common origin of the two nations.

Literature.]—In literature and science, the Japanese yield to few of the Orientals. They are well versed in the history of their country. They study geometry, survey with tolerable accuracy, and construct maps† with as much exactness as their imperfect instruments will permit. Astronomy is also cultivated, but has not arrived at any considerable degree of perfection. It is a circumstance worthy of imitation, as well as remark, that the Japanese consider domestic economy as an indispensable science, and make it an object of regular study. The art of block-printing has been long known among them; but they have not yet learned

* Compare Thunberg, vol. 4, p. 80, &c. with Barrow, p. 567.

† The Japanese have maps of their country, of its provinces, and even of its great cities; but it is strictly forbidden to carry any out of the country.

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the use of moveable types. Miaco, the ecclesiastical capital, and residence of the dairi, or sovereign pontif, is the centre of the Japanese literature.* The court of the dairi is entirely literary, and in this city all the books are printed. In regard to the polite arts, the Japanese may be placed on the same footing as the Chinese.

Education.]—Education is said to be conducted in Japan without the use of corporal chastisement; and courage is instilled by songs in praise of deceased heroes. Schools for reading and writing are numerous.

Persons, manners, national character.]—The Japanese are of a middle size, seldom very corpulent, but well made and active, with stout limbs, although their strength is not to be compared with that of the northern inhabitants of Europe.† Their complexion is yellowish, inclining to brown or white, as they are more or less exposed to the weather. The common people being sun-burnt, are brown: the ladies of distinction, who seldom expose themselves to the sun or air, are perfectly white. But it is by the small, oblong, and deep sunk eye, that these people, like the Chinese, are chiefly distinguishable. The colour of their eyes is dark brown, or rather black; and the eye-brows are somewhat higher than those of most other nations. Their heads are in general thick, and their necks short.

* The Japanese are greatly attached to poetry, which with mathematics, the history of the country, &c. are the principal object of application. Music is also a favorite study. Thunberg, vol. 4. p. 6.

† Thunberg, vol. 3. p. 251. Yet the same author tells us, that the carriers of their norimons, or sedan chairs, the only travelling vehicles used in the country, will carry very heavy burdens, at the rate of three miles per hour for ten or twelve hours in a day, vol. 3. p. 110. Surely this is no small exertion of strength.

Their noses are rather thick and short, although not flat; and their hair, which is black and thick, is rendered shining by the use of oils.* The dress of both sexes consists of trowsers and loose robes, or gowns of silk or cotton fastened by a girdle, the number being increased or diminished, according to the coolness or warmth of the weather.† Their shoes are generally made of rice straw; and stockings are not used. The men shave the forehead; and the hair on the sides being turned up and fastened on the crown, forms an economical covering. Their food, consisting of fish, fowl, vegetables, and fruits, is dressed in a variety of ways. Rice supplies the place of bread; and sacki, or beer, made of that grain, is the common beverage. Wine and spirituous liquors are unknown; but the use of tea is universal; and that of tobacco very common. The houses of the Japanese are of wood, painted white in resemblance of stone, and never exceed the height of two stories. They have neither chairs nor tables, but sit on straw mats.

Polygamy is not allowed in Japan, as in other Oriental countries,‡ but concubinage is general. Marriages are conducted by the parents or guardians, and the wife is under the absolute disposal of her husband, the law allowing her no claim in case that she incur his displeasure. The bodies of the distinguished dead are burned: those of the vulgar are buried. The same devotions are paid to the tombs of ancestors as in China. The Japanese have numerous and splendid festivals, games, and theatrical amusements. Dancing girls are common as in other Oriental countries. The

* Thunberg ubi supra. † Thunberg, vol. 3, p. 267.

‡ Thunberg, vol. 3. p. 77. and vol 4. p. 52.

national

national character of the Japanese is compounded of pride, prejudice, and jealousy of foreigners, joined to great ingenuity and determined courage. In the last quality, they are totally different from the unwarlike Chinese.

THE MANILLAS; OR PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

THIS important group extends from about 4° 30′ to 18° 30′ north latitude, nearly in the direction of north and south.* The principal of these islands, both in geographical and political importance, is Luzon, which is near 500 miles in length, by about 100 of medial breadth. This island is said to be pervaded throughout its whole length by a chain of mountains near the eastern side; but the topography of the interior is little known to any Europeans except the Spaniards, who are extremely cautious of publishing accounts of their settlements.† Its mineralogy, however, is known to be rich in gold, copper, and iron. The soil is famed for its exuberant fertility: and the climate, though hot, is said to be salubrious; but earthquakes are frequent, and often destructive. All the tropical productions are here seen in the greatest abundance, and the highest degree of perfection. The rice-grounds produce rich crops: the cotton is excellent; and the sugar-cane, as well as the cocoa-tree, is cultivated with great success. European cattle abound, as do also swine, deer, and various wild animals. The natives of these isles are of a mild character. They are tall and well made, of a deep tawny complexion, and appa-

* Arrowsmith's map.

† This account of the island of Luzon, or Manilla, is chiefly from Sonnerat's Voyage a la Nouvelle Guinea.

rently of Malay origin. The dress of the men is a kind of shirt, with a loose drawer: the women generally wear a long mantle; and their fine black hair often reaches the ground. Their chief food is rice, often eat with salt fish. The whole island is subject to the Spaniards.

Manilla.]—Manilla, the principal city, is handsomely built and well fortified, containing a great number of churches and convents, and about 12,000 Christian inhabitants. This city is an archiepiscopal see, and the seat of the viceroy of the Philippines; but it is chiefly remarkable for its singular trade with Acapulco, which will be described in treating of the commercial system of Mexico. The Philippines were discovered in 1521, by the famous Ferdinando Magellæns, commonly called Magellan, who was killed at the small isle of Mactan, which is here considered as one of this group;* and their present name was imposed in honour of Philip II. of Spain. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Chinese, who were very numerous at Manilla, and whose industry greatly contributed to the flourishing state of the colony, were cruelly massacred by the Spaniards; a dark and horrid transaction, the causes of which have never been satisfactorily explained to the world. In 1762, the city of Manilla being stormed, and taken by the English army and fleet under General Draper and Admiral Cornish, was ransomed from plunder for about 1,000,000*l*. sterling; but the sum was never paid.

Mindanao.]—The next in size among the Philippine islands is Mindanao, on which the Spaniards have but

* Dampier, by mistake, says, that Magellan was killed at the isle Luçonia, or Manilla. Voyage, vol. 1, ch. 41.

few

few settlements. This island, which is mostly mountainous, presents numerous valleys of extraordinary fertility, watered with rivulets, and displaying the most beautiful scenery.* Horses and buffaloes are here amazingly numerous.† Between these two large islands, and in the vicinity, are several others of inferior, but yet considerable extent; and the small islands are almost innumerable.

Borneo.]—Borneo, extending from 7° north, to 4° south lat. and from 109° 30′ to about 118° 30′ east longitude; about 760 British miles in length, and about 625 in its greatest breadth, is the largest island in the world except New Holland, which may with greater propriety be denominated a continent. The greatest part of the country towards the coasts, especially on the northern side of the island, consists of immense swamps, covered with forests, the trees of which are of numberless species, and of a prodigious size. These marshy flats are intersected by rivers, which branch into multitudes of channels, and afford the only means of access to the interior, which, however, is almost wholly unknown. The central parts are said to rise into lofty mountains, and to be often shaken by tremendous earthquakes. Diamonds of an inferior sort are said to be found in the interior country: and gold is known to be one of its metallic productions. The ourang outang is common in this island. Tigers, and various wild beasts, likewise abound. The coasts of Borneo may be ranked among the most disagreeable countries on the face of the globe; and the combination of heat, with excessive

* See Mr. Forest's plates.

† See an ample account of Mindanao in Dampier's Voyage, vol. 1. ch. 11. p. 12 and 13.

moisture, renders the air extremely impure and unwholesome. A large river flows from the centre of the island, almost due south, and forms the harbour of Bendar Mascar. The coasts are possessed by colonies of Malays, Moors, Macassars, and even of Japanese; and the harbours are greatly frequented by Chinese junks. The articles of commerce are gold dust, the diamonds before mentioned, and other commodities, which the natives bring down in boats from the interior, the Moors, and others on the coast, being the factors. On the north-west side of the island is the town of Borneo, which consists of about 3000 houses, built on posts fixed in rafts, which are moored to the shore, and rise and fall with the water, affording an excellent security against inundations. Many of the villages are constructed in this manner, and move from place to place as it suits the conveniency of the inhabitants. The prevalent religion on the coasts is Mahometanism. The natives in the interior are inoffensive Pagans, of a black complexion, with long hair, and better features than those of the negroes. Borneo appears to be divided into a number of petty kingdoms. The Chinese have the principal trade, as the Europeans have no settlement on the island. Borneo is surrounded by numbers of small islands, some of which are rich in pearls.

THE CELEBES.

The chief island of this group is Celebes, sometimes called Macassar. It lies between 4° 30′ north, and 5° 30′ south latitude, but being in a singular manner indented, and divided into various portions by immense bays, its form is so extremely irregular that nothing can be said

said with precision concerning its dimensions.* This island is mountainous, especially in the central parts, where there are several volcanoes. Numerous rivers rise in the lofty mountains, and fall with precipitancy down vast rocks, amidst clumps of trees of enormous size, and of singular form and foliage. The sublime and delightful scenery of this island has been described in the most glowing colours; but amidst its picturesque beauties, it produces a deadly abundance and variety of poisonous plants. Celebes is said to yield considerable quantities of rice; but this island, like that of Borneo, has been little explored; and all the descriptions which writers have given of its beauties and its productions, must be confined to particular districts. The natives are Malays, and extremely courageous and daring. They are greatly addicted to piracy, often attacking vessels with the most amazing and desperate resolution; and being armed with poisoned lances and arrows, they are regarded as very dangerous in those seas.† The city of Macassar is held by the Dutch, who have garrisons in several of the small circumjacent islands, and claim the sovereignty of the whole group. Celebes, however, and most of the surrounding isles, are governed by several Mahomedan, and perhaps Pagan chiefs.

THE MOLUCCAS, OR SPICE ISLANDS.

Gilolo.]—Gilolo, the largest of this group, extending from about 2° 15' north, to 1° 10' south latitude,

* Arrowsmith's map.

† What the Count de Forbin has said of the ferocity of the people of this island, is the reigning characteristic of the Malay nation. Le Poivre ap. Pennant, outlines. vol. 3. p. 53.

in 128 degrees of east longitude, is about 230 English miles in length, and in the irregularity of its form resembles Celebes, being divided by deeply indenting bays into four limbs, the breadth of each of the three southernmost being from twenty-five to about thirty miles; and that of the northernmost somewhat more. The shores are low, the interior is mountainous. The bread-fruit and the sago-tree abound in this island; and cloves and nutmegs may probably be numbered among its productions, notwithstanding the industry which the Dutch have exerted for their eradication. Gilolo abounds with oxen, buffaloes, deer, goats, and wild hogs. The natives of the country are described as not deficient in genius or industry, but their exertions are cramped by the commercial jealousy of the Dutch. This island is subject to the Mahomedan sultans of Ternat and Tidore, the former possessing the northern, the latter the southern part.

Ceram.]—Ceram is another considerable island, about 190 miles in length, by about 40 in breadth, with low shores and inland mountains; but it has been little explored, and is consequently almost unknown. Cloves and sago, however, are reckoned among its known productions: and the latter constituted one of its principal exports.

Bouro.]—Bouro is a lofty island, suddenly rising from a deep surrounding sea, and its interior mountains are said to be visible at the distance of above eighty miles.

*Ternat, Tidore,** *Motir, Machian,* and *Batchian,* are the proper Moluccas. Of these, Ternat, the most northern, is the most important, although not thirty miles in circuit. The sultan of Ternat is sovereign of Motir and Machian, and several other isles, as also of the

* Pennant, vol. 4. p. 192, &c.

northern

northern part of Gilolo, and some districts of New Guinea. His forces consist of a numerous militia, which, in the different parts of his dominions, is said to amount to above 90,000; and his naval strength in those seas is not inconsiderable. The largest of the proas, or small ships, are about ten tons burden, and of a singular construction. The sultan of Tidore extends his dominion over the southern part of Gilolo, and several small isles. The Dutch have, ever since the year 1638, entered into various treaties of friendship and commerce with these Mahomedan princes; but garrisons are placed in order to enforce obedience. Batchian is governed by its own sultan, who is also sovereign of Ceram, and several other islands.

Banda and Amboyna.]—The most distinguished spice islands are those of Banda and Amboyna. Banda is the chief of a group, which comprizes six or seven other islands. All these are very small, being celebrated solely for the production of the nutmeg. This tree, unknown in the other parts of the globe, grows to the size of a pear tree, with leaves resembling laurel. The nutmeg, when ripe, is almost of the size and colour of an apricot, and in shape nearly resembling a pear: the mace is a rind which encloses the shell of the nutmeg. The annual produce of the Banda islands has, by the English, who had them in possession from 1796 to 1801, been found to be about 163,000 pounds of nutmegs, and 46,000 pounds of mace. As these diminutive islands, of which the largest does not exceed eight miles in length, and five in the greatest breadth, are chiefly occupied with the nutmeg plantations, the inhabitants, who are between 5000 and 6000, are supplied with corn, and other necessaries, from Batavia.

The

The celebrated isle of Amboyna, in the 5th degree of south latitude, and the 128th degree of east longitude, is about sixty miles in length, but of an irregular form, and various breadth, being divided into two limbs by a bay on the western side, which gives it a furcated appearance. The face of this island is picturesque and beautiful; woody mountains and verdant vales, interspersed with hamlets and rich cultivation, composing a delightful scenery. Amboyna is chiefly celebrated for the cultivation of cloves, as the Banda islands for that of nutmegs. Cloves are indeed restricted to the former, and nutmegs to the latter, as far as Dutch avarice and policy could effect, by destroying those trees in all the other islands. The clove-tree grows to the height of forty or fifty feet, with spreading branches and long-pointed leaves. In deep-sheltered valleys some trees will produce an annual crop of thirty pounds weight. The town of Amboyna is situated near the south-western extremity of the island. On account of the frequent earthquakes, the houses seldom exceed one story. This being the next settlement to Batavia in wealth and importance, the Dutch inhabitants are tolerably polished. The natives differ little from the other Malays; and the policy of the Dutch tends to keep them in a state of ignorance and depression, equally unfavorable to their prosperity and their morals.*

The Molucca islands appear to have been first visited by the Portugueze about A. D. 1510. The possession was, during some time, an object of contest between Portugal and Spain, but was finally resigned to the Portugueze, who were expelled by

* Description of the spice islands in the Asiatic Register 1800, p. 200, &c.

the

the Dutch. But the English also asserting their claims, a treaty was concluded in 1619, by which it was agreed that the Moluccas, the Banda islands, and Amboyna, should belong to both nations, that the Dutch should have two-thirds, and the English one-third of the produce, each contributing an equal proportion to the common defence.* In the short course of three years, the Dutch, actuated by an insatiable avarice, resolved, by the most diabolical means, to free themselves from all competitors in this lucrative commerce. They forged a plot of the English against their lives and liberties, bnt such a plot as none but ideots could have projected. The charge was, that ten English factors, with eleven foreign soldiers, had conspired to seize on the fort, which was garrisoned by 200 men. Confession was extorted by the most dreadful torments that human ingenuity could invent, or barbarian cruelty inflict; and after the unfortunate English factors, with the foreign soldiers, had, during eight successive days, been put to the torture, death was at last a favourable release from their sufferings. By this horrid procedure, the English were expelled, and the Dutch obtained the monopoly of the spice trade.† In 1796, the islands of Amboyna and Banda were taken almost without resistance, by the English under Admiral Rainier, and the inhabitants were found to be 45,252, of whom 17,813 were Christians: the rest were Mahomedans,

* The proportion was ten ships of war for each nation. These were to be furnished of equal burden, and of equal strength in men and guns. Rymer's Fœdera, p. 17, 170.

† Pennant, vol. 4. p. 168. Anderson seems less positive in exculpating the English. The Dutch, however, were compelled to pay a considerable sum to the heirs of the Englishmen thus murdered. Hist. Comm. vol. 2. p. 427.

except

except a few Chinese and savages. At the peace of 1801, these islands were restored to the Batavian republic.

THE SUMATRAN CHAIN, OR ISLES OF SUNDA.

SUMATRA, the largest of this chain of islands, and, next to Borneo, the largest in the Oriental Archipelago, being not less than 950 English miles in length, from north-west to south-east, is crossed nearly in the middle by the equator. The face of the country is very different in different parts of the island. The western shores present extensive and unhealthful swamps; and three-quarters of the isle, especially towards the south, are covered with impervious forests. An interior chain of mountains, about twenty miles distant from the western shore, runs through the whole island, forming double, and in some parts, treble ranges. Mount Ophir, exactly under the equator, rises to the height of 13,842 feet above the level of the sea, being only 2000 feet lower than Mont Blanc. Sumatra possesses a rich mineralogy in gold, copper, iron, and tin. The gold mines are mostly neglected; but tin forms an abundant article of exportation. The soil is in general a stiff reddish clay, covered with a black mould, which produces a perpetual verdure. The climate, although in the middle of the torrid zone, is not intensely hot, the thermometer rising seldom above eighty-five degrees, which is far inferior to the heats of Bengal, and several parts of Russia, not to mention Persia, Arabia, the Egyptian Thebais, and the interior of Africa. In the mountainous inland country the air is often cool, although

frost and snow are unknown. But thunder and lightning are frequent, especially during the north-west monsoons. The rainy season begins in November, and ends in March; the dry season begins in May, and ends with September. In the intermediate months, the weather is changeable. Notwithstanding the apparent richness of the soil, it does not seem completely to answer the purposes of cultivation. Sumatra, however, presents many curious and useful productions. Among these are a variety of drugs, as benzoin, camphor, and cassia. Here is also abundance of coffee, though not famed for excellence. But pepper is one of the most abundant and valuable productions, and the principal object of the English settlement of Bencoolen. In regard to zoology, the horses are small, but well made and hardy; the cows and sheep are likewise of a diminutive size. The buffalo is tamed, and employed in domestic labour. The wild animals would fill a large catalogue. Among a number of others are the elephant, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, the tiger, the bear, the wild hog, the deer, and many varieties of the monkey. The birds are also numerous; among which the Sumatran pheasant is of distinguished beauty. The inhabitants of Sumatra may, in a general view, be divided into two classes, the inland Pagans, and the Malays and Mahomedans on the coasts. But according to Mr. Marsden's detailed account of the native tribes, there is in the interior a singular race of men overgrown with long hair, and little superior to the ourang outang. The interior tribes form different petty sovereignties. In their persons some of them, especially towards the south, have a near resemblance of the Chinese. The Malays are ingenious, and excel in gold and silver filagree, as well as in silk and cot-

ton; but their other manufactures are imperfect, and the sciences are little cultivated. Besides the Malay, several other languages are spoken, which, however, appear to have some degree of affinity. And it must be regarded as a mark of civilization, that some of the interior tribes have a written language. The commerce of Sumatra is chiefly with Hindostan and China; but the kingdom of Acheen, in the north-west part of the island, carries on a considerable trade with the coast of Coromandel.* Among the small islands which encompass Sumatra, that of Banca is famous for its tin; and the mines appear inexhaustible.

Java.]—Java, the second of the Sunda isles in extent, and the first in importance, is about 650 English miles in length from east to west, and 100 in breadth from north to south. The face of the country greatly resembles that of Sumatra in its swampy shores, and its interior mountains, by which it appears to be intersected throughout its whole length. The soil, the climate, and seasons, the vegetable and animal productions, the impervious forests, and other chief features of Java, so nearly resemble those of Sumatra, that in this general view a particular description of the former is unnecessary. This island derives its great political and mercantile importance from its capital city, Batavia, the centre of the Oriental power and commerce of the Dutch.

Batavia.]—Batavia is situated in 6° 12′ south latitude, and 106° 51′ east longitude. The road is full of shoals, but a circular range of islands protects it from any heavy swell, and renders it safe for shipping.† This city

* This description is taken chiefly from Mr. Marsden's account of Sumatra, to which the reader may in general be referred for more minute information.

† Staunton, vol. 1. p. 226.

is tolerably fortified with walls, and has a citadel next to the sea. But it owes still more of its strength to nature than to art. From the shallowness of the water, it is in a great measure secure from a naval attack: the dreary swamps intersected in every direction by innumerable ditches and canals, among which it is situated, are almost, and might soon be rendered completely impassable; while the insalubrity of the atmosphere would, in a few weeks, annihilate a besieging army.* Batavia may therefore be considered as almost inaccessible to an enemy; and the unhealthfulness of the climate renders it impregnable. It is therefore not a matter of wonder, that in the wars which England and France have had with the Dutch, no attempt has been made to strike at the root of their Oriental power and commerce, by the reduction of this important place, the great magazine of the East.† Although Batavia is so near the equator, the heat is not so intense as might from that circumstance be expected, the thermometer seldom rising higher than to ninety-two degrees: but the low situation of the town, and the putrid exhalations from the bogs, the canals, and a muddy sea, render the air so sultry and malignant, that from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon, it is scarcely possible to walk abroad; and it is usual to change linen twice a day. The water is also of an extremely bad quality; and to complete the series of inconveniencies, nocturnal repose is disturbed by the numerous swarms of musquitos. The fœtid

* The chief strength of Batavia is its pestilential climate. Sir George Staunton, vol. 1. p. 286.

† Batavia was attacked without success by the king of Maseran, a Javanese prince, in 1630, and by the Bantamese in 1655. Anderson's Hist. Com. vol. 2. p. 275.

fogs render the air so unwholesome, that dysenteries and putrid fevers appear to be more destructive at Batavia than the plague in the Levant.* Nothing but security from hostile attack could ever have induced the Dutch East-India Company to fix on such a situation for their capital. To this fatal spot, however, great numbers of Dutchmen resort and sacrifice their lives, in the attempt to raise their fortunes.† Amidst these horrid and pestilential swamps, a lucrative commerce and an avidity of wealth, have caused a city to rise, which, in magnificence, opulence, and splendor, excels most others in Asia, and even may vie with many of those which Europe displays. The city of Batavia is large and elegantly built: the houses are splendid and richly furnished. The streets are spacious, and most of them have canals of stagnant waters pervading their whole length, and decorated on the sides with rows of large trees; a plan, which, in a situation where the quantity of the moisture ought to be as much as possible diminished, appears to contribute to the unhealthfulness of the place. This metropolis of the Indian Archipelago is peopled by many different nations;‡ but the Chinese,

* All writers agree in their representations of the malignancy of the Batavian atmosphere. Captain Cook's crew experienced its fatal effects; and in his voyage, Batavia is described as the grave of European navigators.

† Thunberg, however, observes, that the irregular diet of the Europeans contributes to the destruction which takes place among them. The poorer sort of people commit excesses in eating fruit, and in the improper use of arrack; and the rich indulge too much in strong food and heating liquors. Thunberg's Trav. vol. 2. p. 280, and vol. 4. p. 134 and 135, where he depicts the luxurious mode of living among the Europeans at Batavia. He agrees, however, with all other travellers in representing the climate as the most unhealthful on the face of the globe.

‡ See Sir George Staunton's Description of this Dutch colony and city, vol. 1. ch. 7.

who,

who, for the sake of gain, are contented to abandon the tombs of their ancestors, and slight the laws of their country against emigration, constitute the most numerous and most industrious part of the inhabitants. The port or road of Batavia, at a considerable distance below the town, is the general rendezvous of the Dutch fleets in those seas. The commerce of this emporium of the East, which is still very great, was once far more considerable, when the Dutch were in the meridian of their naval power and Oriental monopoly.* The governor-general here resides with a pomp approaching to royalty: and the mode of living among the great officers of the Company, and the opulent merchants, displays a mixture of European elegance and Asiatic magnificence. Java is divided into three or four considerable principalities, governed by native princes.† In person, complexion, and lineaments, the Javanese resemble the Sumatrans. There are some Pagan tribes, but the prevalent religion is Mahomedanism. Near Cheribon are seen an ancient tomb and a mosque, which are ranked among the most magnificent monuments of the Oriental Archipelago. The other islands of the Sumatran chain are little known, and of trifling importance, except Timor, which is 200 miles in length, by 60 in breadth, and is considered as a kind of barrier to the spice islands. In this general view, it may easily be supposed that a great number of small and unimportant islands are omitted. Without such omission, indeed,

* Anderson exhibits a splendid picture of the power and commerce of the Dutch at Batavia before the close of the seventeenth century. Hist. Comm. vol. 2. p. 276. See also curious remarks on the trade of the East-India Company in De Witt's Int. de la Hollande, par. 1. ch. 19.

† For a minute account of the island of Java, see Stavorinus's Voyage, vol. 1. English translation; as also in Thunberg, vol. 4.

 this

this work would descend to the minuteness of a gazetteer, and swell to an enormous size, as the isles of the Eastern Archipelago might be counted by thousands, and are almost innumerable. A sketch of the most important must therefore suffice.*

AUSTRALASIA.

THE division of the globe, to which the President De Brosse assigns the name of Australasia, or the southern region, may be considered as comprehending the extensive central land of New Holland, with all the isles that are, or may be discovered within twenty degrees to the west, and within twenty-five or thirty degrees to the east. To the south, Australasia may be considered as extending to the vicinity of the Antarctic circle, where the islands of ice begin to appear.

New Holland, extending from about 11° to 38° 30' south latitude, and from about 112° to 153° 40' east longitude, nearly 2700 English miles in length from west to east, and 1920 in breadth from north to south, is, beyond comparison, the largest island in the world, and may indeed with greater propriety be denominated a continent. It is not, however, yet ascertained, whether this immense tract be continuous, or divided by narrow streights into different islands. It would be an imposition on the understanding of the reader, to pretend to delineate the geographical features of this vast country, of which we scarcely as yet know the skirts and extremities. The

* More particular accounts may be found in Marsden's Sumatra, Forest's Papua, Stavorinus's and Sonnerat's Voyages, and Pennant's Outlines, from which this sketch is extracted.

vegetation

vegetation and zoology display an ample field of research for future naturalists; but all the knowledge hitherto obtained relating to those subjects, is confined within narrow limits. The small particle of the country that has yet been explored, is hilly, though not mountainous, and is in many places covered with forests of tall trees; but the timber is said to be brittle and useless; and the shores present large tracts of swampy ground. The small portion of its zoology that is already brought to light, presents to the eye of scientific observation several rare and curious animals and volatiles. Among the former may be reckoned the kangaroo, and dogs that never bark: and among the latter, pelicans of the largest species, together with that rare production of nature, the black swan, which in size is superior to the white, and equal to it in elegance.* The inhabitants of this immense region do not appear to be all of the same origin. Some are as black as the negroes of Africa, but their hair is long, and not woolly: others are of the Malay complexion. Their features are for the most part disgusting; a flat nose, wide nostrils, eyes deep sunk in their sockets, thick lips, a mouth of a prodigious width, and often very prominent jaws, generally forming the contour.† Their teeth, however, are mostly white and even, and the men have black bushy beards. These people are of a low stature, and ill made, their arms, legs, and thighs, being remarkably small and thin. Those tribes which live near the coast, and consequently are exposed to European observation, seem

* Pennant's Outlines of the Globe, vol. 4. p. 108, 130.

† Collins's History of the Colony, p. 554. Dampier, who visited New Holland in 1688, says, that they have curled hair like the negroes. Dampier's Voyage, vol. 1. ch. 16.

to be in the most early stage of society, that has yet been discovered in any part of the globe. They are merely divided into families, the chief of which is entitled beana, or father. Both sexes are naked, the use of clothing being wholly unknown.* Fish is the only food of the tribes on the coast; and those in the woods subsist on such animals as they can catch. Even worms and caterpillars are said to be articles of food. Their huts are rudely constructed of the bark of trees, in the form of an oven, the fire being at the entrance, and the interior filled with smoke and nastiness. In these huts they sleep promiscuously; but nocturnal repose is often interrupted by their mutual enmities and frequent assassinations. Their canoes are made of bark, stretched on frames of timber; and the fish is either killed with a kind of prong, or taken with lines of bark, and hooks of mother-of-pearl oyster, rubbed on a stone till fit for the purpose. Among these rude people no traces of religion are perceived; but they appear to have some faint idea of a future existence: and think that after death they return to the clouds, whence they originally fell. They are extremely superstitious, and believe in the existence of magic and witchcraft.† A great number of their manners and customs are described by Collins and others: but enough is here said to shew that these people are in the lowest degree of the savage

* Dampier says, that they would not accept of clothes when offered them; and that they could not be prevailed on by any rewards to take the trouble of assisting to carry water. They did not seem to admire any thing that they saw. Dampier's Voyage, vol. 1. ch. 16.

† Dampier describes them as little above the brute creation. He differs from the more recent accounts in describing them as tall; but he may have seen some other tribes, and taken from them his observations. Dampier ubi supra.

state,

state, and as near the level of the brute creation as human nature can possibly sink. It may, however, be added, that one of these tribes, more numerous and powerful than the rest in its vicinity, exerts the singular prerogative of extracting a tooth from the young men of other families, in token of government and subordination. The solemnity of paying this singular tribute of teeth, appears to be performed every fourth year with a number of ridiculous ceremonies. The language spoken by these people is represented as melodious, expressive, and sonorous, having no analogy with any other known language ; but the dialects of different regions seems to be totally different. No observations, however, that have yet been made on their language and manners, afford the least indication of the origin of these savage tribes.—Such is the imperfect sketch that can now be given of this extensive portion of the globe, which, in the space of another century or two, will probably afford authentic and interesting matter for new volumes of geographical description.

The vast region of New Holland, although hitherto sunk in the depths of barbarism, and lost to science and civilization, is now beginning to rise into notice. It is not improbable that the Portugueze were the first, but the Dutch appear to have been the principal discoverers of this immense region.* At different periods, from 1616 to 1644, various parts of the coast were discovered by successive navigators. No European nation, however, established any colony in the country; and Captain Cook having accurately examined the Eastern coast in the year 1770, took pos-

* De Brosse. Histoire de la Navigation aux terres Australes, vol. 1. p. 426.

session

session of it in the name of his Britannic majesty. This was the commencement of a new epoch in that benighted portion of the globe. The new territory was, in 1786, fixed on as a place of transportation for criminals; and, in 1788, the first fleet carrying convicts from Great Britain arrived on the coast, and began to establish a settlement.* It was found necessary, however, to encounter many difficulties, and several unforeseen inconveniences attended the new colony. Botany-bay was the place first chosen for its establishment, but was not found, on experience, to answer the expectations formed of its advantages. Governor Phillips, therefore, deemed it expedient to transfer the colony to another inlet, about twelve miles further to the north, called Port Jackson, one of the finest harbours in the world, extending about fourteen miles within land, and containing numerous creeks. A place, called Sydney-Cove, on the south side of the inlet, was fixed on for the new settlement. The colonists at first experienced considerable difficulties in regard to subsistence, and met with some unexpected misfortunes. The sheep were stolen by the natives, and the cattle wandered into the woods. But in 1795, the latter, after having been lost seven years, were found grazing in a distant meadow, and had multiplied to a surprising degree. Another settlement was meanwhile formed on Norfolk Island, with a view to the cultivation of the New Zealand flax; and in 1797, a space of about fifty miles round the colony had been explored. Coal and rock-salt have been discovered. So vast a region as New Holland, which extends through at least 27° 30′ of latitude, must present a great variety both of soil and climate; and

* Collins's History of the Colony, vol. 2.

until

until the country be more fully explored, these, as well as the rest of its natural features, lie beyond the reach of description. The physical circumstances of the English settlement in latitude 34° south, and longitude 151° east, however, is already known from observation and experience. The soil is in general a blackish mould, fertile in plants, from which circumstance it received the name of Botany-bay; and considerable quantities of wheat and maize have been raised, especially on Norfolk Island. Time and cultivation will further develop its qualities and productions. It is scarcely necessary to mention, that from its situation in the southern hemisphere, the seasons are the reverse of those in Europe. In December, the middle of summer, the weather is very hot, heavy rains are frequent, especially about the full and change of the moon: and in Norfolk island the weather is rainy from February to August. In general, however, the climate is allowed to be salubrious.

The philosophical observer of mundane affairs, extending his views into futurity, may, in this remote and savage region, discover grand objects of contemplation. He will behold the diffusion of the British race and language in this distant part of the opposite hemisphere, and view new empires bursting into existence. New Holland will, in a few centuries, present the spectacle of another America, a new world of rising knowledge and civilization; and at some future period this barbarous and benighted portion of the globe may become one of the seats of commerce, of literature, and science.

PAPUA, OR NEW GUINEA.

THIS extensive region is as little known as New Holland. It was even considered as doubtful, whether it did not form a part of that vast central land, till Captain Cook explored the streight by which they are separated. The unfortunate French navigator, La Peyrouse, is supposed to have been employed in completing the discovery of its coast, when he met his untimely fate. Amidst the deficiency of information, Papua is considered as a vast island, of not less than about 1200 miles in length, and of an irregular breadth, amounting perhaps on a medium to 280 miles.* The coasts in general are lofty; and within land, mountains rising above mountains, richly clothed with woods, present a magnificent scenery, which has impressed every navigator with delight. The interior being totally unknown, all our accounts of the natural history of this country are of course limited to a few particular spots on the coast. The shores, however, are said to be clothed with cocoa-trees; and Mr. Forest found abundance of nutmeg-trees in some small islands near the harbour of Dory, on the northern side. From this circumstance, and from its situation, it is highly probable that Papua, if thoroughly explored, would not be found destitute of nutmegs, nor perhaps of cloves; and, if colonized by Europeans, might probably be one of the most valuable of the spice islands. It is not indeed a little surprising, that in this extensive country, which appears to be highly favoured by

* These measures are taken from its appearance in Arrowsmith's Chart. Papua may perhaps nearly equal, but does not seem to exceed Borneo in extent.

nature,

nature, and is probably enriched with her choicest productions, no European settlement has ever been formed. The zoology, so far as it is known, is romantic and singular, Papua and the neighbouring isles of Aroo being the favourite residence of the beautiful birds of paradise. The crowned pigeon, almost equal to the Turkey in size, is scarcely a less singular production of animal nature. Several others, remarkable for singularity and beauty, are noticed by navigators, whence it may reasonably be presumed that this country would present an ample and interesting field to the naturalist.

The inhabitants of Papua are black, with the woolly hair of the negroes; and from their resemblance to the natives of the African coast, the Europeans gave to the country the name of New Guinea.* The aspect of the Papuans is hideous and frightful. They are of a good stature, and strong shape; their skins are of a shining black, but rough, and often disfigured with marks like those occasioned by the leprosy; their eyes are very large, their noses flat, their mouths extremely wide, and their lips amazingly thick; so that the whole assemblage of their features gives them a terrific appearance. Their woolly hair is of a shining black, or else of a fiery red, the last colour being probably owing to some sort of powder. It is dressed in an enormous bush resembling a mop, sometimes three feet, and at the least two and a half in circumference, and often ornamented with the feathers of the birds of paradise. Several of them bore their noses, and pass through them rings, pieces of bone, &c. while some also hang round their necks, by way of ornament, the tusks of boars. The men

* Sonnaret. Voyage a la Nouvelle Guinée, vol. 2. p. 121.

have

have no clothing, except a small wrapper round their waists, of the fibres of the cocoa-tree; and the women wear a covering of the coarse baftas of Surat, tucked up behind, so as to leave the legs and thighs exposed to view. They appear to be embroiled in those intestine hostilities so universal among savages; and slaves, most probably prisoners of war, were offered to Captain Forest at a low price. These people, however, shew considerable ingenuity in the construction, and dexterity in the management of their proas, which, like those seen in several of the isles of the Pacific Ocean, have a singular and striking appearance. The Chinese carry on a trade with the Papuans, whom they furnish with various instruments and utensils, and carry back ambergris, tortoise-shells, birds of paradise, lories, and various other birds, which the natives dry with great skill. Some slaves are also exported. In the neighbourhood of Papua, are several other islands of considerable extent, and somewhat better known, but too unimportant to be objects of particular description.*

New Britain, *New Caledonia*, and the *Islands of Solomon*, situated rather to the eastward of Papua, have been little explored; but as far as they are known, they appear to have a near resemblance to that country. The productions seem to be in general the same. In New Britain the nutmeg is said to be found in abundance; and this island is probably the utmost limit of that valuable production towards the east. The country is supposed to be populous. The people resemble the Papuans, and appear to be skilful in the

* This account of Papua is chiefly collected from the voyages of Sonnerat and Forest. The country, however, merits a more perfect description than any authorities at present can furnish.

management of their canoes. Of the Solomon island, all our accounts are extremely obscure, and even discordant.* New Caledonia is a large island, discovered by Captain Cook; but its northern side alone has been somewhat explored; and its dimensions are not yet ascertained. Among its productions, the bread-fruit and cocoa-tree were observed.† The inhabitants are muscular and strong, and of a dark brown complexion; their hair, which is not woolly, but frizzled apparently by art like that of the Papuans, is also, like theirs, ornamented with a comb, and the beard is cut short. The houses are neatly built in the form of a bee-hive, but have no outlet for the smoke. Their food appears to consist chiefly of roots and fish. The New Hebrides were visited by Captain Cook in the same voyage; but they had been previously discovered by Bougainville in 1768. The natives resemble those of New Holland, and are dexterous in the use of the spear.

NEW ZEALAND.

The extensive region of New Zealand was first visited by Tasuran, the Dutch navigator, in 1642; and here some of his men, who ventured on shore unarmed, were massacred by the natives. Captain Cook explored the coasts in 1770, and was the first who discovered that this extensive country is divided by a streight into two large islands, one of which is at least 600 English miles in length, by about 150 in medial breadth, and the other is little inferior in size.‡

* De Brosse. Hist. de la Navigation aux Terres Australes, vol. 1. p. 175, &c. Dalrymple's Collect. vol. 1. p. 16.

† Captain Cook's second Voyage.

‡ Captain Cook's first Voyage.

Any description of the geographical features and natural history of this country, as well as of others in this quarter of the globe, must necessarily be very imperfect, and restricted to narrow limits, as the coasts alone have been the subject of European observation. From the little that has been seen of New Zealand, the surface appears to be mountainous. The highest mountain that has hitherto been observed, is that of Egmont, on the northern side of New Zealand, which, from the circumstance of being perpetually covered with snow, Dr. Forster supposes to be 14,000 feet in height. The inferior hills are covered with lofty trees of the most luxuriant appearance, retaining their foliage the greatest part of the year. The climate is temperate, but appears to be moist; and clouds of a beautiful green sometimes present to the eye of the naturalist a curious phænomenon.* Among the few productions of New Zealand which have been discovered and examined, the flax is that which has excited the greatest attention, being of a beautiful silky appearance, and the plant remarkably tall. In some parts it is cultivated; but in most places it is said to grow spontaneously in great quantities.† The culture has been attempted both in England and France without success; but the cause of its failure remains undiscovered. It is a remarkable circumstance in zoology, that in this extensive region no quadruped has hitherto been observed except rats, and a kind of fox-dog, which is trained by the natives as a domestic animal. The birds are more plentiful, and many of them seem peculiar to the country.

* Dr. Forster's Observations, p. 81, 116.

† Collins, on the authority of two natives, p. 524.

The

The people of New Zealand equal the tallest Europeans in stature: their complexion is a dark brown, little deeper than that of the Spaniards who are exposed to the weather. They possess an acute and enterprising genius, and are exceedingly bold, ferocious, and daring. Their dress is an oblong garment, not woven, but made by knotting the silky flax: they ornament their ears with beads and bits of jad, and often besmear their faces with a kind of red paint. Their habitations are far superior to those of New Holland; and they display their ingenuity in the construction of their boats, which are well built of planks, fastened together with strong withs, and some of them sufficiently large to carry above thirty men. These boats often have a head ingeniously carved, displaying a human face distorted by rage. A general observation indeed may be made, that, in savage life, images are rather terrific than pleasing. They bake their fish in a rude kind of oven; and a gelatinous vegetable, resembling sago, supplies the place of bread. The New Zealanders are ingenious mechanics with their rude tools, which are mostly of jad. They appear to be divided into different tribes, governed by their respective chiefs. The ranks of subordination are the chiefs and their officers, the priests, whose influence is equal, if not superior, and the common people.* These tribes are generally in a state of warfare. Their weapons are spears and javelins, with the patoo, a kind of rude battle axe; and in battle they distort their faces like dæmons. The captives taken in war are always eaten by the victors; and the bodies of the slain are immediately cut in pieces, broiled,

* Collins on the authority of two natives. Account of the Colony, p. 524.

and

and devoured with the greatest satisfaction, a custom which appears more sanguinary and shocking, as these people believe that the soul of a man, whose body is eaten by his enemies, is doomed to eternal torments. Nothing can therefore more fully demonstrate their implacable and revengeful temper, than the satisfaction which they express in the idea of extending their vengeance beyond the grave, by not only destroying the bodies, but rendering the souls of their enemies eternally miserable. On the whole, the New Zealanders may be ranked among the most ferocious of the human race; and no state can be more unhappy than that in which they live, under constant apprehensiou of mutual destruction.*

Among the New Zealanders, no external traces of religion, no temples nor public worship are discovered: the priests alone are employed to address the gods. The people, however, believe a future state of existence, and, as already observed, the eternal damnation of those who are eaten by their enemies. Those who escape this fate are buried; and they believe that on the third day after interment, an Ea-tooa, or inferior divinity, carries the soul to the clouds, while another conveys the impure part to a certain point on the coast, and precipitates it into the sea. The New Zealanders are not more remarkable for their ferocity than for their daring spirit and determined contempt of death. Suicide is so common among them, that they frequently hang themselves on the most trivial occasions. Van Diemen's land, another large island of the Australasian division, is about 160 miles in length, by 80 in medial breadth. The productions and the inhabitants seem to resemble those of New

* See Cook's last Voyage.

Holland, from whence it is separated by a streight, about ninety miles wide, and interspersed with small islands.*

POLYNESIA.

Those numerous collections of islands widely dispersed in the Pacific Ocean, which the President De Brosses, as already observed, distinguishes by the general name of Polynesia, and which, if not considered as a grand geographical division, must be regarded as belonging to Asia, present themselves in the following groups. 1st, the Pelew Islands; 2d, the Ladrones; 3d, the Carolines; 4th, the Sandwich Islands; 5th, Marquesas; 6th, the Society Islands; and 7th, the Friendly islands. Besides these, are many others widely scattered in this immense ocean; and future navigators may probably enlarge and improve the geography of this portion of the globe by new discoveries. The Pelew islands have been minutely and elegantly described by Mr. Keate, the Ladrones, by the Jesuit Gobiens, and the Carolinas, by De Brosses. Of the Sandwich Islands, the Marquesas, the Society, and the Friendly Islands, ample descriptions are found in the voyages of Cook and La Peyrouse, and in that of the missionaries. To enter into particular descriptions of these numerous groups, would lead to a prolixity totally incompatible with the design of this work, which is intended to exhibit the grand features of the globe and of human existence, while these detached and diminutive spots have never had, nor will ever have, any important influence on politics or commerce, nor make any distinguished figure in the history,

* This description of New Zealand is chiefly taken from Collins and Captain Cook's first and last Voyages.

tory of the world. The task would indeed be superfluous: these isles are described in the above-mentioned voyages with a minuteness inadmissible in a work of general delineation: many of the prolix descriptions there given, have been transcribed into several miscellaneous and periodical works, and given in abridgement by various geographical writers. Any new description would therefore be little more than a mere repetition of what has already been often repeated. Otaheite, the largest of the Society isles, in particular, is a familiar theme, " on which more has been written than concerning several kingdoms of Europe."* As of all the isles of the Pacific Ocean, this is the most known to the Europeans, and has excited the greatest degree of public attention, it may not be amiss to exhibit a sketch of its principal features, geographical and moral, which may in some measure be considered as a standard of general representation, from which the other parts of the Polynesian picture vary in different degrees of shade and colouring, rather than in any striking lineament.

Otaheite is in size by far the most considerable of the Society isles, which are sixty or seventy in number. It consists of two peninsulas joined together by a neck of land about three miles in breadth.† The larger peninsula on the north-west is almost circular, and about twenty-five miles in diameter. The length of the smaller peninsula on the south-east is about fifteen, and the breadth about ten miles. These peninsulas rise into two distinct mountains, enclosed by a border of low land, which, from the shore to the rising of the hills, is in some places about a mile in

* La Peyrouse Voyage, vol. 3. p. 362.

† Map in the Missionary Voyage.

breadth;

breadth: in other places ridges, branching out from the central mountains, and separated by valleys of the most luxuriant fertility, extend to the sea. Situated in the 18th degree of south latitude, and the 150th degree of west longitude, Otaheite has a hot but salubrious climate. The bread-fruit may be considered as one of its most important productions. The cocoa and plantain also abound. The inhabitants are of a good stature and elegant limbs: their complexion is olive, somewhat inclining to the copper colour, and darker or lighter, in proportion to their greater or less exposure to the sun: their skins are also fine and soft. They have fine black eyes, white even teeth, and hair of a jetty black, which they perfume and ornament with flowers.* Their features and countenances are in general agreeable and pleasing; their disposition good-natured and cheerful, and their manners mild and affable. Their voice and language are soft and harmonious: and their rude manufactures evince the greatest ingenuity. Their dress is picturesque: an oblong piece, with a hole in the middle to admit the head, hangs down before and behind. Both sexes wear garlands of flowers and feathers, and dress nearly in the same manner. In regard to religion, they acknowledge a multitude of Ea-tooas, or divinities. To these they erect morais, or temples, and endeavour to render them propitious by human sacrifices. The victims are generally criminals, who are killed when asleep, a curious instance of savage superstition, united with mildness of character. Their priests are numerous, and have great power and influence. The Otaheitans admit the immortality of the

* The chiefs are observed to be taller than the common people, few being under six feet. See Cook's Voyages, &c.

 soul,

soul, and degrees of future eminence and glory, proportioned to those of virtue and piety; but they reject the idea of future punishment.

Sandwich islands.]—The Sandwich islands were so named by Captain Cook, the original discoverer, in honour of the Earl of Sandwich, who had warmly promoted his undertakings. The people are somewhat darker than the Otaheitans, whom they otherwise resemble. They are extremely ingenious, and have made some progress in agriculture and manufactures.

Owyhee.]—Owyhee is the largest of this group, and indeed of all the islands that have yet been discovered in the wide extent of Polynesia. It is about 280 miles in circuit, and the centre rises into lofty mountains. The honour of its discovery is due to the immortal Cook; and here that illustrious navigator met his untimely fate, being killed by the natives in an affray, which originated rather in a sort of misunderstanding, than in ferocity of disposition, or premeditated design.

Friendly and Navigators islands.]—The Friendly islands, including the isles of the Navigators, discovered in 1768 by Bougainville, appear, from the representations of La Peyrouse, to be, in regard to fertility and population, the most important of all the Polynesian groups.* He describes the isles of the Navigators as exceedingly populous and plentiful in different kinds of provisions, such as hogs, fowls, pigeons, and fruit. At Maouna, one of this group, 500 hogs, and an immense quantity of fruit, were procured in the space of twenty-four hours. Captain De Langle Lamanon, the naturalist, and nine seamen, were massacred at this island, the captain having

* La Peyrouse, vol. 3.

unadvisedly

unadvisedly made presents of beads to a few of the chiefs, while he had neglected the others. According to La Peyrouse, the largest of these islands are Pola, Oyolava, and Maouna, of which he supposes the aggregate population to amount to 400,000; but this is probably an exaggerated estimate. He describes the island of Oyolava as equal at least to Otaheite in extent, beauty, fertility, and population. In this island was observed the largest village ever seen in all Polynesia; and the sea appeared to be covered with canoes. The people are remarkable for stature and strength, as well as for a ferocity of character scarcely to be observed in any other of the Polynesian isles. They display extraordinary industry and ingenuity in all their works, and seem particularly skilful in the management of their numerous canoes. Their language is a dialect of the Malay, being understood by a native of the Philippines, which evidently shew them to be of a Malay origin.

Tongataboo.]—But of all the islands scattered in this vast expanse, Tongataboo, discovered in 1643 by Tasman, who gave it the name of Amsterdam, appears to be that in which civilization has made the greatest advancement. Though this be the chief of the Friendly isles, it is no more than sixteen miles in length, by eight in its greatest breadth; but it displays a picture of industry little to be expected in this remote and sequestered part of the globe. The surface appears to be level; and the whole island, consisting of inclosures, with reed fences about six feet high, intersected with innumerable roads, is in an universal and surprising state of cultivation.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THE ASIATIC ISLES, AND THOSE OF THE SOUTHERN AND PACIFIC OCEAN, ARRANGED UNDER THE DIVISIONS OF AUSTRALASIA AND POLYNESIA.

AMIDST the want of more ample discovery, and the necessary conciseness in treating such a multiplicity of subjects, it may not be amiss to supply the deficiency of particular description, by adding some general observations, which may tend to exhibit these numerous and widely scattered portions of the earth in a concentrated view. Except Japan, which these observations are not intended to comprize, all the isles of the Indian, or Oriental Archipelago, being situated in the torrid zone, and in general possessing a fertile soil, abound in all the productions of the tropical climates, and in a number of peculiar plants and spices.* But of all these extensive islands, the coasts alone are explored, while the topography and natural history of their interior regions, are totally lost to scientific observation. The same may be observed of the numerous islands of the Pacific Ocean, which in general are only known from the hasty visits of navigators. Otaheite is perhaps the only Polynesian island, of which the central parts have been completely explored. From the smallness of those isles, however, a less degree of difference must exist between the interior and the maritime parts, than in the extensive countries of Luzon, Borneo, Java, Sumatra, &c. The principal islands yet discovered in the Pacific Ocean, and here arranged in the grand division of Polynesia, like those of the Indian Archipelago, lie between the

* See description of the Spice islands.

tropics,

tropics, and abound in most of the tropical productions, besides some of a peculiar nature, of which the noted bread-fruit is one of the most singular and useful. One particular observation is to be made on the zoology: although the seas abound with fish, no quadrupeds, except hogs, dogs, and rats, have been found in any of the Polynesian islands: of birds, there are great abundance and variety. Australasia being mostly situated in the temperate zone, only Papua and the northern part of New Holland lying between the tropics, many of its productions must be different from those of the above-mentioned islands. From the observations, however, that have hitherto been made, the Australasian countries present the same scarcity of quadrupeds as Polynesia.

But the human species in this, as in all other regions of the globe, is the most interesting part of the picture. In what manner, at what time, and by what gradual steps the human race has been diffused throughout these remote and detached spots, which nature seemed to have concealed amidst an immense ocean, history does not mention. The population of New Holland, and still more that of Papua, appears to be originally African; but at what time, and on what occasions, Africa poured into those distant regions her barbarous tribes, are questions that can never be solved. In the central parts of the large islands of the Indian Archipelago, various tribes exist, of which it would be in vain to attempt to trace the origin. But all the maritime parts, and all the Polynesian isles, from the Phillippines to New Zealand, and from Sumatra quite through the wide extent of the Pacific Ocean, evidently display Malay population. The inhabitants of the Friendly islands

appear to have made the greatest improvement in agriculture and civil polity, while the New Zealanders are in the most deplorable state of barbarism. The Otaheitans are distinguished for the pleasing affability of their manner; and the people of the Marquesas are celebrated for the beauty and symmetry of their persons, which might furnish models to the statuary and the painter.* But in all the detached regions of this extensive portion of the globe, the same lineaments and complexion, with some shades of difference arising from the circumstances of climate, or particular customs, are universally observed; and the Malay language, in different dialects, every where prevails. Physical and moral circumstances, therefore, concur to indicate a Malay origin. A late ingenious writer, however, supposes the original population of all those countries to have been the black race, found not only in Papua, &c. but in the centre of some of the larger Asiatic islands. According to this hypothesis, the Malays neglected the south, and bending their progress toward the east, left Papua, New Holland, &c. in the possession of the primitive race, but gradually extended their conquests as far as Otaheite and the Marquesas. And it appears, that on these occasions, the aboriginal blacks in the larger islands retired to the interior mountains, where they still exist in various tribes, while those of the smaller islands were either exterminated, or mingled with the lower class of their conquerors.† This conjecture seems to be authorized by the well-known circumstance of the common people of Otaheite, being of

* Missionary Voyage, p. 145.

† Dr. Forster's Observations, p. 358, &c. This opinion seems also to be countenanced by La Perouse, vol. 3.

lower stature and darker complexion than the chiefs, and apparently of a mixed race.

The discoveries and conquests of the Malays and the Arabians, form an interesting, but extremely obscure portion of history. When the Europeans first discovered the Asiatic islands, they found the coasts, as at present, possessed by Mahomedan colonies. Some of these might probably be of Arabian extraction, as the Arabians had subdued the coasts of India as far as Cape Comorin, previous to the arrival of the Portugueze under Vasco de Gama in 1494. The greatest part of the Mahomedans of the Oriental isles, however, are, from their language, known to be Malays. It is therefore evident that their expeditions have been undertaken at different periods. Their discovery and conquest of Polynesia have been effected while they were yet pagans. In latter times, perhaps, they have thought a second conquest of those remote islands an unprofitable undertaking; and since they became Mahomedans, they have confined themselves to the Indian Archipelago. The isles of Ternat, Tydore, and Batchian, are the seats of the three most easterly Mahomedan kingdoms; and the small island of Goram, which is adorned with thirteen mosques, is the eastern boundary of the Mahomedan religion.* This island is a little to the south-east of Ceram, and both are subject to the sultan of Batchian.

It will not be amiss to conclude this complex and extensive article with a short extract from the observations of an eminent philosophical traveller, who has exhibited a striking and comprehensive view of the Malays, that extraordinary people, whose origin and history baffle all investigation; but whose extensive

* Forrest's Voyage, p. 33.

diffusion is an unequivocal proof and a perpetual monument of the part which they have acted on the theatre of the world. Beyond the kingdom of Siam, says M. Le Poivre, is the peninsula of Malacca, a country formerly well peopled, and consequently well cultivated. This nation was once one of the greatest powers, and made a very considerable figure on the theatre of Asia. The sea was covered with their ships, and they carried on a most extensive commerce. Their laws, however, were apparently very different from those which subsist among them at present. From time to time they sent out numbers of colonies, which, one after another, peopled the islands of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Celebes, or Macassar, the Moluccas, the Phillippines, and those innumerable islands of the Archipelago, which bound Asia on the east, and which occupy an extent of 700 leagues in longitude from east to west, and about 600 feet of latitude from north to south. The inhabitants of all these islands, those at least upon the coasts, are the same people. They speak almost the same language, have the same laws, the same manners. Is it not somewhat singular, that this nation, whose possessions are so extensive, should scarcely be known in Europe.* This picture is an excellent representation of general features, although the darkness by which the objects are surrounded, prevented the painter from tracing particular lineaments.

* Le Poivre Philoph. Voy. ap. Pennant's Outlines of the Globe. vol. 3.

END OF VOL. IV.

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